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THE APOLOGY OF *Benjamin Ben Mordecai* TO HIS FRIENDS, FOR EMBRACING CHRISTIANITY;

IN SEVEN LETTERS

To ELISHA LEVI, Merchant, of *Amsterdam*.

TOGETHER WITH

An EIGHTH LETTER,

ON THE

GENERATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

WITH

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE SECOND EDITION, WITH
ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS, AND A COPIOUS INDEX.

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LETTER THE FIFTH.

It has always been MY desire, to see Religion treated as a *rational* thing; free from all Absurdity and Folly.—The Religion of *Nature* is capable of the strictest Evidence; and therefore *that* is never to be deviated from, or given-up. The Religion of *Christ*, as it lies in the *new Testament*, is perfectly agreeable-to, and consistent-with, what *natural* Religion teacheth; and so it will be always found by them, that examine into its Truth with sincerity.

Pref. to the second Edition of Dr. *Sykes'* Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion.

I HAVE shewn, in my last Letter; that, according to our own Prophecies, the *Messiah* ought to have come before the destruction of the Temple and City of *Jerusalem:* and that the Prophesies of Him have been fulfilled, in the Person of *Jesus Christ*; who answers in every respect to the prophetic character of the

Meſſiah; and can be no other, if *our* Propheſies be true.

And therefore, when I was beginning this Letter, I propoſed to enter immediately upon conſidering the mediatorial Scheme of Salvation by Him; and, as I went along, to take Notice of all the Objections to it, which appeared to be of any conſiderable moment: and to explain the Syſtem of Chriſtianity, conſiſtently with the *old* Teſtament, the Attributes of *God*, and the Nature of *Man*. For I knew, by Experience; that, whatever might be the *external* Evidence of Chriſtianity; yet, if it's *Doctrines* did not appear conſiſtent with *theſe*, neither *Jew* nor *Deiſt* would ſtay to examine it: but would argue againſt it *à priori*, that ſuch a Revelation could not poſſibly be *divine*; even though it ſhould appear to be confirmed by Miracles(*a*). But, when I began to conſider my ſubject with this view I found it neceſſary, before I could proceed, to lay down a clear and diſtinct Notion of thoſe very Principles and *Criteria*, by which the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion is to be examined; and to make it the buſineſs of the preſent Letter to conſider the Nature of *Man*, the Attributes of *God*, and the method of his moral Government over Mankind, as far as this ſubject is concerned; and to clear the Scripture Doctrine

(*a*) See Letter IV. p. 563. note (*b*).

of

of the *Fall*, and a *mediatorial Redemption*, from ſome of the falſe repreſentations of its Friends and Enemies.

To this purpoſe, in the firſt place, I ſhall conſider the Nature of *Man*: becauſe, if a Revelation be *divine*, it muſt be agreeable to the Nature of thoſe Beings to whom it is revealed. Almighty God hath given to his Creatures their particular Natures and Qualities; that they may be able to ſerve thoſe Ends and Uſes, for which he made them: and conſequently, he will govern them according to thoſe Natures and Qualities; for a Being of infinite Wiſdom will always be conſiſtent, through the whole Courſe of his Providence: He will not require Vegetables to act by *Choice* or *Volition*; nor the Brutes to live by the Laws of moral Rectitude; nor one Man to govern himſelf by an other's Underſtanding and Conſcience: But he will require of every intelligent Being, according to the Capacity he has given him; and, as far as he is *capable* of knowing how he ought to act, ſo far, and no farther, his Duty will extend; for no Perſon can be under a moral Obligation to do, what his Underſtanding is not able to inform him that he ought to do; after he has taken all the pains he can, either by himſelf or others, to know his Duty: but his moral Obligation will always be inſeparable from, and commenſurate to, the perception of Rectitude; for to ſee an action to

be *right*, is the ſame thing as to ſee that it *ought* to be performed. The Underſtanding therefore is to every man, after he has taken all the pains he is able for Information, the Boundary of his Duty: and Conſcience is nothing elſe but the reflex Act of the Underſtanding upon the rectitude or obliquity of our Conduct. From hence it follows; that Obedience to the Underſtanding in all moral Concerns, is *Virtue*; and Oppoſition to it, is *Vice:* an intelligent Being can deſerve Praiſe or Reward, no farther than as he acts agreeably to his intelligent Nature; nor Diſpraiſe or Puniſhment, any farther than as he acts in oppoſition to it; and this is univerſally true; under all advantages or diſadvantages whatſoever.

Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem
Fortunarum habitum—

The caſe is juſt the ſame, under the benefit of a Revelation; and under the dictates of unaſſiſted Reaſon.

From hence it follows; that, if, upon a ſtrict and impartial Examination into the Evidence in proof of a Revelation from God, our Underſtanding is not convinced; there can be no *merit* in believing it: for the *merit* of believing conſiſts in opening our hearts to Evidence, and then determining as our Underſtanding directs. In like manner, if our Underſtanding, after the beſt Enquiry, is not able to direct us; what Revelation

velation comes from God, and what does not; there can be no more *merit*, in receiving a *true* Revelation; than a *falſe* one: it depends intirely upon Chance: and if in ſuch a ſituation we ſhould reject the Truth, and eſpouſe the Error; it would not be our *Fault*, but our *Misfortune*; and we ſhould deſerve the Pity and Compaſſion, but by no means the Reſentment, of thoſe; who ſhould be acquainted with the importance of the Truths we had rejected, and the ill conſequences of the Errors we had eſpouſed. But to apply Force and Violence, or any other Means in ſuch caſes, except Evidence and Reaſon, to convince the Underſtanding; is as inconſiſtent with the Nature of Man; as it is abſurd and ridiculous, to think of forming Axioms out of Halters; or Syllogiſms out of Chains and Gibbets.

The only way to convince the Underſtanding muſt be, to enlighten it with more abundant Evidence; or to ſhew the thing in a different light. By theſe means innumerable Truths, which are unattainable by mere Reaſon, and yet of very great Importance to our well-being; may be diſcovered to us by Revelation: for nothing can be proved, by the mere light of Reaſon; but what *neceſſarily* follows by the very *Nature* of things, and could not have been otherwiſe. Probable Conjectures may be made, from what God *hath* done; to what he *may* or *will* do, in ſuch circumſtances as ſeem to us to be of a like

like nature; but we can come to no Certainty, except where we can prove it contrary to the divine Attributes to act otherwiſe; for every thing, that depends upon the *mere* Will and Bounty of God, and the particular Time and Manner in which his Bleſſings are diſpenſed, can only be known by *Revelation*. And this Revelation muſt be conſiſtent in every particular with the Nature and Reaſon of Man, wherever it relates to his moral Conduct; or elſe he would be obliged to act by two oppoſite and inconſiſtent Laws: which is an Abſurdity to ſuppoſe.

Having ſaid thus much concerning the Nature of *Man*; I ſhall proceed to explain, as far as is neceſſary to the preſent purpoſe, the Nature and Attributes of *God*. For, as nothing can become our Duty, which it is contrary to the Nature of *Man* to perform; ſo neither can any thing become our Duty, which is contrary to the Nature and Attributes of *God* to require.

Now the *moral* Attributes of God, which are chiefly to be conſidered upon this Subject, are thoſe of Juſtice and Goodneſs; upon which I ſhall obſerve as follows—

1. The Juſtice or Righteouſneſs of God may be conſidered poſitively, or negatively. The *poſitive* Juſtice of God conſiſts, in giving to his Creatures as much Good; as they have any claim of Right to *expect*: and, if they have no claim of Right, his *poſitive Juſtice* is intirely out

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of the Queſtion. The *negative* Juſtice of God, conſiſts, in not extending the Puniſhment of his Creatures beyond their Guilt: that is, beyond what they have *deſerved*.

I do not think it at all neceſſary here to enter into the Queſtion; whether there be any immediate Connection in *nature* between Virtue and Reward, Vice and Puniſhment: Perhaps, there may not: But, when we conſider God as the *moral* Governor of the Univerſe, it ſeems to follow of neceſſity, that He will encourage Virtue, and diſcourage Vice; by the diſpenſation of natural good and evil in ſuch proportion, as to bring-about the end in view: for he promotes *Virtue*, by forming a Connection between moral and natural *Good*; and he deters from *Vice*, by forming a Connection between moral and natural *Evil*: and, when this is done in a *judicial* way, we ſay that God *rewards* good actions; and *puniſhes* the bad. And thus *Virtue* will be connected with *Reward*, and *Vice* with *Puniſhment*, by the introduction of a third link in the Chain; *viz.* the Ends of divine Government.

As to caſes of mere Bounty and Favour; where more is given than hath been merited, or (if all Merit be excluded, by the perverſeneſs of our actions;) wherever the deſerved Puniſhment is forgiven, in whole, or in part; the Juſtice of God is not at all concerned. For it is no Injuſtice, to *diſpenſe Favours*; where there is no *prior* Merit

rit, or juſt Claim; as in Creation: or, where Puniſhment or Satisfaction might juſtly be required: as in Forgiveneſs. And therefore, in all ſuch caſes, God may withold his Favours; or grant them, on what Terms he pleaſes; or δωρεάν· that is, without any Terms or Conditions at all: as beſt ſerves the ends of his Government in promoting Virtue and Happineſs.

There is, ſays Dr. *Whichcote*, a *Juſt*, which of Right *may* be done; and there is a *Juſt*, which of Right *muſt* be done (*b*): [or, as Mr. *Emlyn* expreſſes it, *quod fieri poteſt*; and *quod fieri debet*(*c*).] The rule or law of Righteouſneſs *requires that* to be done, which juſtly ought to be done; but it doth not *require* every thing to be done, which juſtly *may* be done. Or, in other Words, Juſtice conſiſts in giving every one what is *due to* him; but not in exacting all that is *due from* him: every Being having a Power and Right, to give freely what is his *own*; or to forgive what is his *due*, without Injuſtice. Otherwiſe, Juſtice would be inconſiſtent with Mercy and Bounty. And we do not find any attribute of God in the Scripture, which neceſſitates him to puniſh; wherever the Ends of his Government can be better ſerved by Mercy, Bounty, and Forgiveneſs.

(*b*) *Aphoriſms*, 490, 701. (*c*) This he farther explains; Tracts, vol. i. p. 241.

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2. The *Goodneſs* of God, conſidered as diſtinct from his *Juſtice*, conſiſts either in conferring *unmerited* Happineſs; (that is, where there is no *prior* proportionable merit in the Perſon on whom it is conferred;) or in leſſening or forgiving the Puniſhment, which might *juſtly* be inflicted.

But here again it muſt be obſerved; that, as *Juſtice* does not require every Puniſhment to be inflicted, which *may* be inflicted conſiſtently with Juſtice; but the ends of divine government are always conſidered: So neither does *Goodneſs* require every Bleſſing to be conferred upon the Individuals, which may be conſiſtent with Goodneſs. But even the Goodneſs or Bounty of God is carried-on for the good of the Whole; and muſt be frequently reſtrained by the ends of Government to promote the Virtue and Happineſs of the *Whole*; with which many Evils among the Individuals may not only be conſiſtent, but very neceſſary to promote them.

The Opinion of the *Chriſtians*, with regard to the Providence of God and the general Law of his Government over all, is entirely agreeable to our own Scriptures. *They* believe, with *Us*, that no Man hath *ſeen* God at any time, nor *heard* his voice (*d*); and conſequently, that God hath never appeared *in Perſon* to any of the Sons of

(*d*) *Job* i. 18.—I *Tim.* vi. 16.

Men; but always by his Angel or Meſſenger: as when he is ſaid to have appeared to *Aaron*, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and the ſeventy Elders of *Iſrael*(*e*). And they believe, that every the minuteſt particle of Matter is known to Him; and the very Hairs of our Head numbered (*f*): that the ſmalleſt Animal is the object of his Care and Providence and Benevolence; and every individual Perſon through the infinity of Space, to whom he has given Underſtanding to govern *himſelf*; and every Parent in the Government of his Family, and every Magiſtrate in the Government of Society, and every King and Potentate in the Government of States and Empires, and Angels in the Government of Worlds or Syſtems of Worlds, or whatever Beings are ſuperior to Angels; are all ſubject to his Superintendence; their Thoughts, as well as their Conduct, the Objects of his Knowledge and his Care; and all of them *accountable* to him for their Actions: and that he is always preſent to every part of his Government, and orders or executes what is beſt and wiſeſt for the benefit and perfection of the whole; ſuffering in the mean time all the Weakneſs, Error and Folly, (which muſt unavoidably happen among imperfect Beings, in proportion to their imperfection;) as far as is fit and right to do ſo; and rectifying

(*e*) *Ex.* xxiv. 10. See Letter II. p. 228. (*f*) *Mat.* x. 30.

them

them in his own time and manner, or teaching them how to rectify them themſelves, as he ſees to be moſt agreeable to Wiſdom; and moſt proper to promote Virtue and Righteouſneſs. For God does not govern the World by unintelligent Power; or by abſolute Neceſſity, or Fate, or arbitrary Will; but by *free* and *unconſtrained Volition*, and by *moral Laws*; and the End and Deſign of his Government is to extend moral Perfection and Happineſs through the Univerſe. His *Exiſtence* and his *natural* Attributes are *neceſſary*; and muſt therefore be always the *ſame*, in every reſpect and in all places; but his *Actions* are *free* and *voluntary*: He can begin and continue and determine them to what Time, Place, and Degree he pleaſes. "He made the World, not from any Neceſſity determining him; but when he *thought proper*. Matter is not neceſſary; but he created as much of it as he *thought proper*; he placed the Syſtem of the fixed Stars at various diſtances from each other, at his Pleaſure. In the ſolar ſyſtem he formed the Planets of ſuch a number, and diſpoſed them at ſuch various diſtances from the Sun, as he pleaſed. He made them all move from Weſt to Eaſt; though it is evident from the motion of Comets, that he might have made them move from Eaſt to Weſt. In theſe and other inſtances we plainly perceive the veſtiges of a *wiſe* agent; but acting *freely* and with per-

fect Liberty(*g*)." And herein consists his Goodness; that though he has all Power, which nonothing can resist; yet he constantly *chooses*, without any possibility of Restraint upon him, to do that which is most *just* and *good*; and tends to the moral Perfection and Happiness of his Creatures.

As to the moral Attribute of Justice; Mr. *Theophilus Gale* has given us this strange account of it. "*Man*, says he, *wills* things; because "they are *just*: but things are therefore *just* with "*God*, because he *wills* them(*h*)." But is it possible; that the same Action, and under the same Circumstances, should be just, when performed by *one* Being; and unjust when performed by *an other?* May it not as safely be said; that a proposition may be *true* when asserted by *one* Being; and *false*, when asserted by *an other?* This was not the opinion of our Father *Abraham*; when he drew near to God, and said; "Wilt "thou also destroy the Righteous with the

(*g*) *Maclaurin*'s account of Sir. *I. Newton*'s Philosophical Discoveries; p. 383. Neither are they to be commended, says Mr. *Maclaurin*, who, under the Pretence of magnifying the essential power of the supreme Cause, make Truth and Falshood depend on his *Will*. Such tenets have a direct tendency to introduce the absurd Opinion, that intellectual Faculties may be so made; as clearly and distinctly to perceive that to be *true* which is really *false*. *Maclaurin*, p. 379.

(*h*) Court of the Gentiles, pt. IV. bk. ii. ch. 5. § iii. p. 350.

"Wicked?

"Wicked?—That be far from Thee, to do "after this manner; to ſlay the Righteous with "the Wicked, and that the Righteous ſhould "be as the Wicked; that be far from Thee: "Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do "*Right*(*b*)?" Our Father here ſpake what was true, and worthy of the ſupreme God; and thereby obtained that glorious Title; which *Plato* has alſo given to the *Religious* man; who he ſaith, is the Friend of God (*i*); in oppoſition to the *Superſtitious* Man, who is his *Flatterer*. The Chriſtian Religion does not oblige us to ſpeak *wickedly* for God, nor to talk *deceitfully* for him (*k*); but is equally an enemy to Superſtition, as our own: Nor does it ſuffer us, therefore, to exalt his abſolute Will and Power at the expence of his moral Character; as if it depended wholly on his Will, that Virtue is preferable to Vice; and not upon its own intrinſic Nature. But it teaches, what is true in fact; that Rectitude is unchangeable, independent, and eternal; and no more the ſubject of Power or Will, than neceſſary Exiſtence—Men may flatter Tyrants; by telling them, that They can change the nature of Things; and make right to be wrong, and wrong to be right, at their Command: But, while they think to exalt them by ſuch ſpeeches, they in reality

(*b*) *Gen.* xviii. 23, &c. (*i*) *James* ii. 23. (*k*) *Job* xiii. 7.

deprive

deprive them of every moral Excellence; and debaſe them below the common ſtate of Man. For, if Right and Wrong depend on mere Will and Power; there can be no ſuch thing as Goodneſs, or Juſtice, or moral Excellence of any kind, even in God himſelf: becauſe, if he had acted the very reverſe to what he always has done; (which may very juſtly be ſuppoſed, if it had been in its own Nature equally right:) his Actions, according to *this* notion, would have been equally *juſt* and *good* and *praiſeworthy*; as they now are. But Chriſtianity does not, by a falſe Compliment to abſolute Power, confeſs what is not true; that God would be equally the object of our Adoration, as he now is; (merely upon account of his abſolute Dominion;) if he were *cruel*, *unjuſt* and *falſe*: but, with a rational and manly worſhip, adores and praiſes him; becauſe he chooſes to be *merciful*, and *juſt*, and *true*. But he could not be merciful, nor juſt, nor true, in annexing Damnation to the vicious Actions of his Creatures; if Virtue and Vice depended on mere arbitrary Will; and the Vice which he condemns was in its Nature equally meritorious with the Virtue which he rewards. On the contrary; it would be the greateſt Cruelty, to form Laws of right and wrong; by which a great number of his Creatures would fall ſhort of Happineſs: when, if things were left to themſelves to continue as they

they were, no one could be condemned at all. If, before a Law, Actions were all indifferent; how cruel muſt it be, to make ſuch a Law as would condemn a great part of the Creation; by calling or declaring one thing to be *good*, and another to be *evil*; one *juſt* and another *unjuſt*; when in Truth and Nature there was no Difference, but one thing was as good and as juſt as the other! As ſuch an arbitrary Determination would be contrary to the Mercy and Juſtice of God; ſo would it be alſo to his Wiſdom and Knowledge. To conſider one thing to be good, and another to be evil; when he knew them to be *indifferent*, in themſelves, and in their conſequence; would be contrary to God's Knowledge: and to *declare* them to be ſo, would be contrary to *Truth*: and to prefer the one to the other, in ſo extraordinary a manner; if there were no difference in their Natures, upon which to found ſuch preference, would be contrary to *Wiſdom*. For arbitrary Will, as it makes no difference or alteration in the things *themſelves*, can be no ground or reaſon of preference to an intelligent Being.

But, in truth; God does not make one thing right and another wrong; one thing morally good, and another thing morally evil; but only *reveals* to us their ſeveral Natures: and he does not do this in order to manifeſt his *Power*, but his *Love*. He deters us from Vice; becauſe, in its

its very Nature, it is *deſtructive* to rational and natural Happineſs: and he allures us to Righteouſneſs, becauſe it preſerves every thing in its proper State, every Being in its proper Rights, and promotes Regularity and Order and Harmony between the ſeparate Intereſt of the ſeveral Individuals through the Univerſe; and thereby the true Intereſt and Happineſs of the whole.

To explain ſome other particulars in the method of God's Government, it will be neceſſary to obſerve; that the *Happineſs* of intelligent Beings is of two Sorts: one of which conſiſts in the *outward* Circumſtances, in which they are placed; and the other in the *inward* Satisfaction and Enjoyment of their Conſciences; and theſe two muſt unite in the ſame Perſon, to render his Happineſs *compleat*. Now the Benefits we receive from God, ſuch as Knowledge and Underſtanding, and every perfection of Mind and Body; and all the motives to Rectitude and Virtue which we find in the human breaſt, and the capacity of Improvement in happineſs, are innumerable; and are all conferred upon us δωρεὰν, by the free gift of God, as an all-powerful and benevolent Creator and Benefactor, without any merit of our own. And he confers theſe bleſſings upon us; to enable us, by the *right uſe* of them, to attain to *Virtue* and *Righteouſneſs*; and thereby gain that inward conſcious Happineſs, which ariſes *ſolely* and *entirely* from the approbation

bation of our own Conduct: and is incapable of being derived in any other manner: It muſt be a man's own Acquiſition; or it cannot exiſt at all. And God, who deſigns the rational and virtuous part of the creation to enjoy all kind of rational Happineſs; hath placed them in ſuch Circumſtances as to put this kind of Happineſs within their own power; and then, as a moral Governor and Judge, ſhowers down upon them ſtill greater perfection, and higher degrees of good; in reward of their moral Improvement. And thus his Providence is directed to promote both the *natural* and *moral* perfection of his Creatures, wherever it can be done in that way, by beſtowing his bleſſings in a *judicial* manner, as the rewards of Virtue: And from hence it comes to paſs; that, though Almighty God is always *willing* to beſtow his bleſſings *as a bountiful Benefactor*, upon his Creatures; yet, *as the Patron of Virtue*, he frequently witholds them; till he can beſtow them *judicially*, as the *rewards* of perſonal Merit, and *encouragements* to Virtue and Righteouſneſs. And for this Reaſon it ſeems *that even Chriſt* himſelf, our great Exemplar, was not exalted to his great power in an arbitrary manner, as a *free* Gift; but by a *judicial* act of Reward, after he had *merited* it by extraordinary acts of Humiliation and Obedience; whereby the glory of his exaltation received a double Luſtre, and doubly ſerved the cauſe of

Righteouſneſs. This ſeems alſo to be the reaſon, why God commanded *Abimelech* to deſire *Abraham* to pray for him; ſaying, he is a Prophet; and he ſhall pray for thee, and thou ſhalt live(*l*). And ſo again God ordered the Friends of *Job* to offer up a burn'd offering, and "my "Servant *Job* ſhall pray for you; for him will I except(*m*)." Here it is plain, that God was *willing to forgive*; but would have it done in ſuch a manner, as to promote Virtue and Piety; by accepting the prayers of thoſe, who were holy. And the chief meaning of Sacrifices ſeems to be of the ſame Nature; that by ſuch a voluntary Gift to God, Men might make their firſt advances towards Him, in a public manner; and appear to receive the bleſſings they prayed for, as a reward of their pious behaviour.

There is an *other* Circumſtance in the Adminiſtration of Providence, which ſeems to be a Conſequence of this; and is no leſs worthy our Obſervation: viz. Though Almighty God is deſirous that the diſtreſſes of Men ſhould be alleviated; (as appears manifeſtly, from the commands he has given them to aſſiſt and befriend one another;) yet he frequently ſuffers them to *continue* under their Afflictions, if they be not actually relieved by the benevolence of their *fellow-creatures:* Which ſeems to ſhew; that,

(*l*) *Gen.* x. (*m*) *Job* xlii. 8.

when

when God hath enabled Men to aſſiſt one another, and given them opportunities of doing it, and a conſciouſneſs that it is their Duty; he expects, the whole race of Man ſhould carry-on this purpoſe; without his immediate interpoſition. "The divine Scheme, ſays Mr. *Richard Price*, is plainly this; that Events ſhall be in a certain degree, what created Agents make them. God's Will, in numberleſs Caſes, appears to be; that one Being ſhall, or ſhall not, receive particular Benefits, or ſuffer particular Evil; as his fellow Beings ſhall pleaſe to determine(*n*)." And Experience ſhews this Obſervation to be juſt, in a thouſand inſtances. And if, by the good behaviour of any one of the human race, in aſſiſting his fellow-creatures, he can gain *for them*, or *enable them to gain* for themſelves, thoſe Rewards, which the moral Governor of the Univerſe hath appropriated to virtuous actions; and by his Labour or Sufferings in the cauſe, elicit *moral* Good from *natural* evil; the gain muſt be immenſe(*o*). And he that is ſo wiſe and benevolent, as to act in this manner; is worthy of the higheſt Reward and Praiſe. And as this is a moſt reaſonable Requiſition from all Men to one another, as being all fellow-creatures; ſo it alſo ſeems to point-out a Reaſon, why the Son of God ſhould take our Nature upon him; and

(*n*) *Price* on Providence, p. 97. (*o*) *Rom.* viii. 18.

why our Salvation ſhould be brought about by one of our own race(*p*).

Having now conſidered the nature of *Man*, and the Attributes of *God*, and the method of his moral Government over Mankind, as far as is neceſſary to my preſent purpoſe; I will proceed to explain, what ſeems to be the Scripture Doctrine concerning the *Fall* of Man, and his Recovery from the ill effects of it by a *Mediatorial Redemption*; and clear it from the Additions and Miſrepreſentations both of the Chriſtians and their Adverſaries: that the third *Criterion*, by which the Truth of Chriſtianity is to be examined *a priori*, may be plain and intelligible.

When (*Elohim*) God created the World, and filled it with Animals of every kind, and Food that was proper for them; God ſaid, Let us make *Man* in our Image, after our Likeneſs(*q*); that is, a moral Governor over the World below them:) and let them have Dominion over the fiſh of the Sea, and over the fowl of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth. And accordingly God formed Man of the duſt of the Ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of Life; and Man became a living Soul(*r*). And the Lord commanded the Man,

(*p*) *Cor.* xv. 21. *Heb.* ii. 14. &c. (*q*) *Gen.* i. 26.

(*r*) Ch. ii. 7. Whatever be the Nature of this Breath of Life, which *we* call the *Soul*; and the Heathens conſidered in the ſame Light as *Moſes* does, to be *divinæ particula auræ*; and

Man, ſaying; Of every Tree of the Garden thou mayeſt freely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it: for

and which Sir *Iſaac Newton* expreſſes by the words *Perſona Hominis, ſeu Principium cogitans*; (*Scol. gen.*) it ſeems, according to St. *Paul*, I *Cor.* xv. 44. to be neither an *animal* Body, nor a *ſpiritual* Body; but ſomething different from both. For the Apoſtle conſiders animal and ſpiritual Body to be merely its Vehicles; with the one of which we are *now* clothed, and with the other we ſhall be clothed *hereafter*. And, if the Soul be neither of theſe; I ſhould conclude, that it is not Body of any kind; but immaterial, impenetrable, deſtitute of the *Vis Inertiæ*, and all the particular properties of Matter; and a Self-mover.—To confirm this opinion, it may be farther argued; that when *Chriſt* was to be born into this World, he deſcended from Heaven; and took upon him, or clothed himſelf with, the body which was prepared for him in the womb of the Virgin *Mary*; and he conſiſted of two Principles: The one of which was Fleſh, or Body, and material; the other Spirit, which deſcended from Heaven, and was immaterial. Now if by this he became a *Man*; then Man muſt alſo conſiſt of the ſame two Principles, the one material and the other immaterial; as He did.—On the contrary, if Body and Spirit be the ſame thing; if *Perſona Hominis, ſeu Principium cogitans* be *Body*, or *Matter*; it ſeems to follow, that the Atoms of *Epicurus* might be endued with Volition, and direct themſelves in ſtrait lines, or in curves, or obliquely, or at what Angles they pleaſed; and form a World, as they ſhould think moſt proper; without any aſſiſtance from without. *Declinare etiam motus, nec tempore certa Nec regione loci certa; ſed ubi ipſa tulit Mens:* which is abſurd and atheiſtical. *Lucr.* ii. 260.

in

in the day that thou eateſt thereof, *thou ſhalt ſurely die*(*s*).

Various have been the diſputes among the Learned; whether this Hiſtory be literal, or allegorical: but I think, it is not of much concern; with regard to our Conduct in life, and our future Happineſs: for the Doctrine conveyed by it, is much the ſame in either caſe.

If it was a literal Reſtriction from one Tree; it inculcated upon our firſt parents the duty of Sobriety, in making their Appetite obedient to Reaſon and Religion; and imprinted on their minds a ſenſe of God, as the great Proprietor of all things; and that they had no Right to this Tree, becauſe He had not given it them: and, by parity of reaſon, this Precept would extend to generals; and then the ſenſe of the words would include their duty to God, their Neighbour, and Themſelves; Sobriety, Juſtice and Piety: if the account be ſymbolical, it muſt be intended to ſignify the ſame duties under a Figure; and in either ſenſe, it was a command of the utmoſt Conſequence to be complied with: as it gave to Man an opportunity of gaining Immortality, by his Obedience to very eaſy Conditions. And, indeed the more trifling the light is, in which the Command is repreſented, by thoſe who object to it on that account; (though moſt Men ſin by the ſame kind of Temptation, in pre-

(*s*) Ch. ii. 17.

ferring

ferring their Appetite to their Reaſon, or the animal to the ſpiritual Nature;) the more eaſy muſt the Condition appear to be, upon which Immortality was offered; and the more heinous the Sin, in diſobeying a Divine Command of ſuch infinite Conſequence; upon a Temptation (*t*); which they repreſent to be ſo ſlight and trifling.

Thus

(*t*) It is not improbable; that this Prohibition gave the firſt Rudiments of the *ceremonial*, as well as of the *moral* Law. For when God preſerves one Tree as his own Property, whether in a ſymbolical or literal ſenſe, to ſhew himſelf the great Proprietor and Lord of all; nothing could be more natural, than for *Adam* and his Poſterity to begin their Worſhip by an acknowledgement of the ſame Truth; and upon any extraordinary occaſion, (as when they gathered in the fruits of the Earth, or any other time of great joy and thankfulneſs, and ſo at length at ſtated times and ſeaſons) to make a voluntary offering and gift to God of a part of their good things; by way of external confeſſion and ſymbolical acknowledgment, that he was the great Proprietor from whom they received them; and to offer them in ſuch a manner, that they might be entirely alieneated from themſelves and from every other man, and thereby appropriated to God; as by burning the Solids in the Fire, or caſting them into the Sea; and ſpilling the Liquids upon the Ground: and ſo at length different Forms and Ceremonies might ariſe, appropriated to different Occaſions; ſome, when they offered thankſgiving; others, when they begged forgiveneſs; others, when they craved bleſſings, or made confeſſion of their ſins: and all theſe might afterwards be reduced into one regular ſyſtem; which formed the ceremonial Law given to *Moſes*. For all agree;

Thus Man became an intelligent moral agent, capable of Good and Evil, and accountable to his Creator in the Government of himſelf and the Creatures under his Dominion.

After God of his own grace and favour had given Life to Man; he made the bountiful gift more acceptable, by adding a Certainty of continuing it, as long as Man ſhould continue obedient to the Law of Rectitude, which he had given them: and thus eternal Life depended on their own behaviour.

This appears to be the obvious ſenſe of the Prohibition; "*In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die*(*u*)," which naturally implies, what

agree; there is no expreſs aſſertion in the ſacred Writings, that this mode of Religious Worſhip was inſtituted by God at the beginning: and no other Notion ſeems with ſo much probability to account-for its being in uſe ſo very early, among the ſacred Rites of almoſt all the Nations of the World; as this does.

(*u*) *Gen.* 17.—The word *Day* in Scripture language is uſed ſometimes for a very long time. The *Day* of Temptation in the Wilderneſs was 40 years. *Pſ.* xcv. 7. *Heb.* iii. 7. The Prophets uſe the Word *Day* for the 70 years Captivity. The *Day* of the great Judgment ſo much celebrated among the *Jews* in all their Writings, and from them taken-up by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, contains the whole *Millennium*, or 1000 years. So 1000 years in the ſight of God are but as yeſterday; *Pſ.* xc. 4. and Eternity is called a *Day*, by St. *Peter*; II. iii. 18. And thus the Penalty on *Adam* might have been literally fulfilled; for he lived 930 years. Or, the word *Day* may mean an

what all ſuch prohibitions do; that, if the Law was not broken, the Penalty ſhould not be inflicted. This Interpretation is confirmed by the book of *Wiſdom*, ſuppoſed to be written by our *Philo*; "God made not Death—but ungodly Men with their Works and Words called it to them (*x*):" and by *Eſdras*; who ſays, unto Him (that is, *Adam*) thou gaveſt commandment to love thy ways; which He tranſgreſſed: and immediately thou appointedſt Death in him and in his generations(*y*). And it is ſo explained by the Apoſtles; who tell us, that Death entered into the world by Sin—and Sin brought-forth Death—and the wages of Sin is Death (*z*): the conſequence of which muſt be, as Dr. *Sykes* obſerves; that, if there were no Sin, there would be no ſuch Wages paid. And indeed this Law, that thoſe who will not obey the command of their Creator, ſhall forfeit all the benefit they have received from him, appears ſo extremely juſt; that one would rather imagine it to be the general Law of Nature, relative to all moral Beings in the Univerſe; than any particular Law, which only regarded our firſt Parents:

an indefinite number of years: or, the words may mean not an actual Death; but a ſubjection to Death, by withdrawing the particular providence, by which he was preſerved. See *Mede*; p. 86, 666.

(*x*) Wiſd. i. 13, 16. (*y*) II *Eſd.* iii. 7. (*z*) *Rom.* v. 12.—*James* i. 15.—*Rom.* vi. 23.

and that it was not then *newly* conſtituted, but only then *declared* and announced to Them.

The plain ſtate of the caſe, according to the Scripture, ſeems to be this; that, when it pleaſed God to create a Race of Beings between the Brutes and the Angels; in whom the two Natures ſhould be joined, by the addition of moral Perception to the animal; he gave it into their power either to indulge the *animal* Nature, and forfeit the hope of eternal Life; or, by cultivating the angelic faculties and improving the *moral* character, to become fit and meet to be partakers of Immortality; and admitted into the rank of Angels. For this ſeems to be the ſenſe of St. *Paul*; in ſeveral parts of his writings: He tells us, "He that ſoweth to his *Fleſh*, (that is, He that labours to indulge the *animal* part of his Nature) ſhall of the fleſh reap Corruption; but He that ſoweth to the *Spirit*, (that is, He that labours to benefit the intelligent, *moral*, or angelic part of his Nature) ſhall of the *ſpirit* reap life everlaſting(*a*). So again; if ye live after the *fleſh*, ye ſhall *die*; but if ye through the *ſpirit* do mortify the deeds of the *body*, ye ſhall *live*(*b*). And accordingly, the Chriſtian Scriptures aſſure us; that *Chriſt* has given us power, to become the *ſons of God*(*c*); to quit entirely the animal Nature, and become

(*a*) *Gal.* vi. 8. (*b*) *Ro.* iii. 13. (*c*) *Luke* xx. 36.

equal

equal to the Angels, the Children of the Reſurrection; who can die no more(*d*). And St. *Peter* expreſſes this whole Doctrine; telling us, that exceeding great and precious promiſes were given to us; "that we might be partakers of the divine Nature, having eſcaped the Corruption that is in the world through luſt(*e*)."

I do not ſee, it is at all neceſſary here to enter into the Queſtion; whether Man was created immortal, and Sin produced Mortality; and *Chriſt* reſtores that Immortality, which *Adam* loſt: or whether *Adam* was created mortal; and *Chriſt* confers upon us an Immortality, which *Adam* failed of gaining by not performing the Conditions upon which it was offered him.—It is ſufficient for the Explanation of the *Chriſtian* ſcheme, to obſerve; that God promiſed Life to to *Adam*, upon his Obedience: and conſequently, whether he was at firſt naturally mortal or not, he could not ceaſe to live, while he continued obedient; and on the other hand, whether he was naturally immortal or not, he would certainly die, if he was diſobedient; and in either caſe, it may be ſaid, that Death entered into the world by Sin, and that by Man came Death; whether it was a poſitive infliction of Puniſhment, or merely the conſequence of withdrawing the particular Providence by which he was preſerved.

(*d*) *John* i. 12. (*e*) II *Pet.* i. 4.

However, it is certain; that the Scriptures never give us the leaſt hint of *Adam*'s natural Immortality: but through the whole Hiſtory conſider his Exiſtence to be dependent on the Tree of Life. For, when *Adam* was driven out of Paradiſe, we are told; that Angels were placed at the Eaſt of the garden of *Eden*, to keep the way of the tree of Life; leaſt he ſhould put forth his hand, and eat, and live for ever(*f*). From whence it appears in a literal ſenſe; that, though Immortality was within his reach; yet he was not then poſſeſſed of it. And the ſame Idea is continued in the Revelation of St. *John*; where we are told, that the leaves of the Tree of Life were for the healing of the Nations (*g*):" which notion of it anſwers in the literal ſenſe to a continued Providence in ſucceſſive ſubminiſtration of help and aſſiſtance and remedy againſt all misfortunes and accidents. And this Interpretation is confirmed by two ſimilar Inſtances in the Scripture; one in the *Old*, and the other in the *New* Teſtament: the firſt is in the Hiſtory of *Hezekiah*(*h*), whoſe ſtate was in this particular, for ſome years, the ſame as *Adam*'s ſeems to have been. It was declared to him by God; that he would add unto his days Fifteen years: And a ſimilar inſtance we meet in the new Teſtament; where it was revealed to *Simeon*(*i*), by

(*f*) *Gen.* viii. 2, 24. (*g*) *Rev.* xxii. 2.
(*h*) II *Kings* xx. 6. (*i*) *Luke* ii. 26.

the

the Holy Ghoſt; that he ſhould not ſee Death, before he had ſeen the Lord's *Chriſt*. Now the Lives of theſe were as ſure and certain, till the time appointed by the promiſe of God, as if they had been naturally immortal: and yet not by any alteration in the metaphyſical nature of the Soul, but by a *particular Providence*. For, whenever God determines *abſolutely* the End, he himſelf will provide the Means to bring it about.

With regard to the Nature of the *Death*, which was here threatened; ſome Chriſtians have fallen into very erroneous notions: and thereby given great advantages to their adverſaries.

Some have imagined; that by *Death* is meant eternal Life in Miſery: But that is only a metaphorical Death; and there is no reaſon, from the words of the Scripture, to believe any other Death was mean'd than a literal one. *Adam* was made of the duſt of the ground; and God breathed into him the breath of Life: and by Death that Life was loſt, and his Body returned to duſt again, and his Spirit to God who gave it(*k*). So that we have no right to underſtand it of any other Penalty, than the loſs of that Life which he had newly received. It was the ſame *Death*, which the Apoſtle ſays paſſed upon all

(*k*) *Eccleſ.* xii. 7.

men

men (*l*); and is oppoſed to the Reſurrection to Life in *Chriſt* (*m*): and every other ſenſe of the word is forced and unnatural; and ſuch as it cannot be ſuppoſed that *Adam* had any Idea of: and the Hiſtory explains it in this Senſe, when it recounts the infliction of the Penalty; and all the days that *Adam* lived were 930 years, and he died (*n*): for who can believe, that the Death he underwent was any other than the ſame that was threatened?

Others think, by *Death* was mean'd eternal Death; or a Death that would never end: but this is inconſiſtent with the hopes of a Reſurrection to Life, which we all believe; both *Jews* and *Chriſtians:* and beſides, we have no Right to extend the Penalty beyond what the words themſelves require. As this was a ſolemn Covenant between God and Man, in which the Terms to be obſerved were explicit on the *one* hand; there can be no reaſon to ſuſpect, that there could be any thing intended in the Penalty, but what was preciſely ſpecified on the *other* hand. And as there is no mention there made of *eternal* Death; nor hint of any other ſenſe of the word *Death*, than what we find in other parts of the *Moſaïc* Writings; we have no reaſon to underſtand it any otherwiſe, than as it is denounced againſt the infraction of the *Moſaïc*

(*l*) *Rom.* v. 12. (*m*) *Cor.* xv. (*n*) *Gen.* v. 5.

Law;

Law; and in the ſame ſenſe, in which all Nations underſtand it, when they make it the Penalty of capital Crimes. And thus it was underſtood, by our ancient Commentators; who aſſert the Serpent to have been *Samael*, the angel of Death: and R. *Menahem* on *Levit.* xxv. from the Cabaliſts, tells us; "all the Souls, who are created and become unclean by the filthineſs, which the Serpent brought upon *Eve*; muſt needs die, before the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, &c. and, at the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, all Souls ſhall be conſummated thenceforth." So then the belief of our ancient Rabbins was; that the Life, which was loſt by *Adam*, was again to be reſtored; and, conſequently, the Death threatened was only to be for a time.

But, though *Adam* ſuffered the Penalty denounced; we have no reaſon to conſider *this*, as his *final* Judgment; for, notwithſtanding this Tranſgreſſion, he might have ſpent the remaining years of his Life in a very virtuous and pious manner. And there are other inſtances in Scripture, of Men, who have been puniſhed with Death for a ſingle Tranſgreſſion, who without doubt, when the whole of their conduct is examined into at the laſt day, will be found well-pleaſing to God; and fit to be partakers of eternal Life. And in truth, this was the caſe of *our* great Lawgiver himſelf; who was debarred from going into the holy Land, and ordered to die

die in Mount *Nebo*, becauſe of his tranſgreſſion in *Meribah Kadeſh*, in the wilderneſs of *Zin*(*o*). And therefore, though Death may be a proper Penalty upon ſome ſingle act (*p*); yet it is not therefore to be looked-upon as a juſt and adequate Judgement upon a Man's whole Conduct in Life; which will be all conſidered by a righteous and impartial Judge, before he can poſſibly paſs Sentence upon him; according to his real Merit and perſonal Character. But every one, who ſhall be found at the laſt day to have acted with ſuch Piety and Sincerity, as ſhall be well pleaſing to God; (notwithſtanding thoſe accidental failings, which no man is always ſufficiently guarded againſt;) ſhall, according to the Chriſtian Scripture, be conſidered as the proper Objects of his Favour.

It is probable; that, before *Adam* had receiv'd from God any intimation, that his race was to be continued; he knew not, but he ſhould immediately die: much leſs could he know, at that time, that he ſhould ever be raiſed again from the dead. For as, on the *one* hand, there was no principle of Juſtice or Equity, which *required* that God ſhould continue him always in a ſtate of Death, which he had *never threatened*; ſo, on the *other* hand, there was no principle of Juſtice or Equity, that made it *neceſſary* to raiſe him

(*o*) *Deut.* xxxiv. 1. xxxii. 51. (*p*) *Num.* xv. 32, &c.

again

again to that Life, which he had forfeited by his Diſobedience. God had therefore an abſolute Power and Right, free from any obligation of Promiſe or Threat, to do as he pleaſed; without any impeachment of his Juſtice or Mercy.—But, when it afterwards appeared to *Adam*, that God deſigned to continue his race; and they were to live in a ſtate, where Death was not pronounced againſt every Sin; but the good and bad were to paſs their lives together in the ſame Society; it was very natural for him to conclude, that God deſign'd a future ſtate of Exiſtence for the Righteous, after this Life ſhould be ended: or elſe he would not continue a World, where Vice and Virtue have ſuch equal Conſequences; that "one thing happens to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacrificeth not(*q*)." This Concluſion the new Teſtament allows us to make; when it is ſaid of the Patriarchs, "but now they deſire a *better* Country; that is, a *heavenly*; wherefore God is not aſhamed, to be called their God: (or rather, God doth not make them aſhamed, in being called their God:) for he hath prepared for them a City(*r*)." That is to ſay, in other Words; God would not have placed good men in *this* World, to go through the fatigues and troubles and diſaſters of it, if he had not deſigned them for a *better*. And there-

(*q*) *Eccleſ.* ix. 2. (*r*) *Heb.* xi. 16. ſee Dr. *Sykes*.

ſore it is a very wrong Concluſion, which ſome Chriſtians make; that, if there had been no *Redemption*, all Mankind would have been *damned:* for it ſeems a much more rational Concluſion, that the race of Men would *not have been continued.* A Writer in the Unitarian Tracts ſays; "If God had not reſolved to redeem Mankind, he would have plunged *Adam* and *Eve* into the pit of Hell; immediately after their Sin: and would not have ſuffered them to propagate a wretched Progeny, who were under a Neceſſity of Sinning. But ſeeing God preſerved the World, and bare with Men; it was an infallible ſign he would aſſiſt them, as far as was neceſſary, to recover the Liberty of the ſons of God; which is confirmed by the Apoſtle *Paul*(*r*).

There are many, who, in order to account-for the preſent weakneſs and wickedneſs of Mankind, imagine; that, upon the Fall of *Adam*, the human Faculties were depraved; either naturally, by ſome taint derived from Him; or by ſome act of God. But the Scriptures ſay no ſuch thing; and we want no ſuch Hypotheſis, to account-for them: becauſe the very ſame Reaſon or Cauſe, be it what it will, which accounts-for the Sin of the *firſt* Man, who came pure out of the hands of the Creator; will account-for the Sins of *all* Men ever ſince: and

(*r*) Unit. Tracts, Vol. iv. Tr. x. *Rom.* ii. 4, 14, 15.

to

to ſuppoſe that God would deprave the Will, or weaken the Underſtanding of Men, merely as a Puniſhment for what they could not help; is a moſt unworthy imputation upon the divine *Goodneſs*: and it is no leſs ſo upon his *Wiſdom*; as if he were capable of contradiction and inconſiſtency. For, if He deſigned to give them eternal Life; why did he make them leſs capable of gaining it (*s*)? and, if he did not deſign it; why did he ſend them a Saviour? This notion was firſt invented, to ſhew the certainty of eternal Damnation to all the poſterity of *Adam*, if *Chriſt* had not died; for as much as by this Taint or Corruption of Nature it was rendered impoſſible for them to do things well pleaſing to God. But this Argument proves *too much*; and therefore concludes *nothing*. For, the leſs *capable* a Man is of Perfection, the leſs will be *required* of him: And, if it were impoſſible for him to do things well pleaſing to God; it would ceaſe to be his Duty.

(*s*) See Phœnix, vol. ii. p. 338. They make *God* like *Tiberius*; who, as *Tacitus* reports in the V of his annals, commanded the hangman to execute *Sejanus*'s Daughter, though innocent and a Virgin; when, notwithſtanding, it was unheard-of, that ſuch a one ſhould ſuffer tyrannical puniſhment.—Wherefore, that he might have ſome pretence, he commanded the hangman, firſt to deflower the Virgin, and then to kill her. In the ſame manner they blaſphemouſly make God dealing with men.

Upon this miſtake the generality of Chriſtians have built another, equally inconſiſtent with their own Scriptures; that upon account of this depravation of the Will and natural Powers of Man at the Fall, a *Mediator* was *at firſt* introduced; as a kind of *Supplement* to the Original Scheme, which was interrupted by *Adam*'s Sin. But this is not true. For it was the *Original* deſign of God, before the foundation of the World, to bring Mankind to Happineſs; by the *ſame* Perſon, whom he has ſince conſtituted a Prince and a Saviour; having appointed him from the beginning, according to the different circumſtances of the World, and under the different Characters of the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, and the *Meſſiah*, to miniſter to the Will of the Father in all things relative to the Salvation of Man; and to do every thing that was neceſſary according to his Will, *pro re natâ*, to bring down upon them thoſe Bleſſings, for which they were created and deſigned.

Some of the Chriſtians maintain, contrary to the firſt Principles of Chriſtianity and even natural Religion, that the Guilt of *Adam*'s Sin deſcended upon his Poſterity, and alſo the *Puniſhment*. But this is impoſſible; from the nature of Juſtice. For Juſtice requires, that the Puniſhment ſhall not be extended beyond the Guilt; and Guilt is merely *perſonal*, and inſeparable from the agent who contracted it; for no one can

can be guilty of a fault, properly ſpeaking; but He that committed it. It cannot therefore deſcend from one Perſon to another. And, if the Guilt cannot deſcend, neither can the Puniſhment; for, if the Puniſhment were to deſcend without the Guilt, it would fall upon the Innocent: but this it will not do, becauſe God is juſt; and Juſtice requires (as above) that Puniſhment ſhall not extend beyond Guilt. Now it is impoſſible that the Poſterity of *Adam* ſhould have been concerned at all in his Guilt, or even privy to it; becauſe they were not in being, when the Guilt was contracted: and conſequently if God is juſt, they are not accountable for it. "How many volumes, ſays Bp. *Taylor*, have been writ about Angels, about Immaculate Conception, about Original Sin; when all that is ſolid Reaſon or clear Revelation in all theſe three articles, may be reaſonably enough comprized in forty lines (*t*)!"

To confirm this Error, ſome argue from the Words of St. *Paul*; that, if *in Adam all died*, then Death was the Puniſhment inflicted upon his Poſterity for his Sin. To which it is very juſtly anſwered; that Death was the *Conſequence* of his Sin; but it was not a *Puniſhment* of it: and theſe are very different things; notwithſtanding the Suffering may be the ſame. But

(*t*) Liberty of Proph. Ded. 44.

let

let us examine what Mr. *Chubb* has advanced upon the Subject. "The Evils, ſays he, are "juſt the ſame; whether they are conſidered as "a Puniſhment for *Adam*'s Sin, or only a natu- "ral *Conſequence* thereof. They are equally the "ſame, in themſelves; and equally the ſame, "as to *thoſe who bear them*: and, he imagines, "the Character and Conduct of the Deity are "equally affected by it." And again; "if theſe "Evils are conſidered as Afflictions laid upon "our Species, on account of *Adam*'s Sin; this "is not to be admitted: but then conjure them "into a Conſequence of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, "and all is right(*u*)."

To which it may be anſwered, as follows. That Death is the *ſame* identical Suffering, in both Caſes; as ſuppoſed in the queſtion: but it was neither the ſame thing, as to the *conduct* of the Deity, whether it was merely a Suffering or a Puniſhment; nor the the ſame thing, as to the *Sufferer*. As to the Conduct of the Deity, it is intirely conſiſtent with his Juſtice to afflict an innocent Perſon; in order by that means to promote his Happineſs: or to place different Men in different Circumſtances, with regard to their happineſs in this Life; and to give eternal Life to whom he pleaſes: but it is utterly *inconſiſtent* with Juſtice; to afflict an innocent Per-

(*u*) *Chubb* on Redemption, p. 78.

ſon,

ſon, by way of *Puniſhment*; for this plain reaſon, becauſe he is *innocent*. And as to the Sufferer; the ſame Suffering will be very different to him, according to the light in which he views it. If a Man ſhould be condemned to loſe a Limb, as a *Puniſhment*; it would be a very different thing to him, from ſuffering an Amputation to *preſerve Life*; though the Pain would be the ſame. Or, if a prince ſhould order an Officer upon a dangerous Attack; it would be a very different thing from his ordering him to undergo the ſame riſque of Life, as a *Puniſhment*. In ſhort, no wiſe and brave Man would refuſe to ſuffer; if the conſequential Advantages in view would make it worth his while: and none but a Fool would ſuffer a voluntary Evil, without ſome Advantage in view; either to Himſelf or Others. This is ſo plain, that even a Child can diſtinguiſh between them: and will voluntarily ſuffer, *with a Reward in view*, the ſame pain; which he would never ſuffer voluntarily, as a *puniſhment*.

It may be farther urged; that Death was not a Puniſhment to the Poſterity of *Adam*, becauſe they were deprived of no Right; for, had the death of *Adam* been immediately inflicted, they would never have exiſted; and, if they had no right to Exiſtence, they could have none to the Continuance of it. Whatever Portion of Life they received, was the *free Gift* of the Creator; and therefore it could not be a Puniſhment, that

it

it was not of longer continuance. The Loſs of Life would have been no Puniſhment, to *Adam himſelf*; if it had not been inflicted upon him *judicially*, as the Penalty of Sin, but it had pleaſed God to have created him for an exiſtence of 930 years, and he had then died without any condemnation: and it can with no more reaſon be called a Puniſhment upon his Poſterity; that their Lives ſhall not be extended in this World, beyond the natural Diſſolution of the Body. In ſhort, they are in the Condition of a Perſon, to whom the Leaſe of an Eſtate is given freely, and of mere bounty, for a few years; Who, inſtead of being thankful for it, complains of it as an Injury, or at leaſt as a Hardſhip upon him; becauſe it was not given him for a longer Term.

But the moſt material Conſideration, which ought abundantly to ſatisfy us in our preſent State, and prevent all Complaint that we are not created under the ſame Conditions as our firſt-Parent, is this; that it would have been of no Uſe and Benefit to us: becauſe we ſhould all of us, by ſome Sin or other, have forfeited Life, as he did; and ſtood in need of a Redemption from Death, as we *now do:* for, that we have all ſinned, will require no proof. So that, inſtead of complaining of Death as an Evil, we ſhould conſider it as the wiſe and merciful appointment of God upon the Introduction of Sin; in order to *prevent* a thouſand Evils in *this* world, which

we

we ſhould otherwiſe be ſubjected to; and admoniſh us to prepare for a more laſting and valuable home in a *better*. And, if Death ſerves to ſuch excellent uſes, it is our beſt Friend(*x*).

Upon the Whole; there is nothing, in the Scripture account of the Fall of Man; and the preſent State of his Poſterity, in conſequence of it; which, when properly conſidered, appears in any reſpect inconſiſtent with the divine Attributes; or the Nature of Man. And it would be ſo far from any benefit to *us*, to have the promiſe of eternal Life, upon the *ſame* Condition as *he* had; that we are in a much *ſafer* and *better* ſtate as we are: as I ſhall ſhew in its proper place. And, after all the Objections that have been made to this Hiſtory, there never was one good Reaſon given; why God, when he created Man, ſhould not firſt ſuffer him to try his own ſtrength; with the great prize of eternal life in view, to encourage his beſt endeavours: before he ſhould vouchſafe to give it him in any other way. Nor can it be ſhewn, that there ever was any bad conſequence from this trial; much leſs any Curſe upon *Adam* or his Poſterity: But quite the Reverſe.—When it appeared in the Event, that Man had not gained eternal Life, by a perfect Obedience to the Law which God had given him, according to Conditions ſtipu-

(*x*) See Eſſay on the beauty of the Divine Œconomy, by *H. Taylor:* page 14.

lated; God, of his own Grace and Bounty, offered it as a free Gift to all his Poſterity; who manifeſt, by their love and regard to his commands, and their benevolence to their fellow-creatures, that they are fit to be truſted in ſuch a ſtate; and are meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light(*y*).

We ſee then, that *Adam* was condemned by a Law; which was mercifully deſigned to give him an opportunity of gaining eternal Life, in reward of his own good behaviour; without the mediation of any other Being.

But, what was mean'd to give Life and Happineſs, was, through his own fault, the cauſe of Guilt and Death; and this Death, by the rigorous nature of Law, would have been without Redemption; had not the Goodneſs and Mercy of the Lawgiver interpoſed, to reſtore him again to Life. *Leges enim rem ſurdam, inexorabilem, nihil laxamenti nec veniæ habere: periculoſum eſſe in tot humanis erroribus ſolâ innocentiâ vivere.*—But though the Law condemns, without mercy or relaxation; it does not prevent the mercy and benevolence of the Lawgiver: *eſſe gratiæ locum, eſſe beneficio: inter amicum & inimicum* (Regem) *diſcrimen noſſe*(*z*). Theſe words of the *Roman* Hiſtorian extremely well expreſs the unavoidable Condemnation of our

(*y*) *Gal.* i. 12. (*z*) *Livii* Hiſt. L. i.

firſt

firſt Parent; and the grounds of his future Hopes, after the Sentence paſs'd; agreeably to the Words of *Hoſea*: O *Iſrael*, thy *Deſtruction* is of *thy ſelf*; but in *me* is thy *Hope*(*a*).

How the Redemption from this ſtate of Death was to be brought about; is a matter of great diſpute. However, it is certain; that it could not be in any way contrary to the nature of Man; or the Divine attributes of Juſtice and Goodneſs. And therefore, all ſuch Doctrines, as explain it in a ſenſe inconſiſtent with theſe, though maintain'd by Men of the higheſt Character, muſt be rejected; if we would defend Chriſtianity upon the principle of Truth.—The method of it conſiſtent with Scripture and Reaſon ſhall be proved hereafter: at preſent I ſhall only prepare the way to it; by ſhewing, in what manner it has pleaſed God to act in ſimilar Circumſtances; and obviating ſome Objections, which ariſe from the miſtaken notion of it.

If we look into the fourteenth chapter of the book of *Numbers*, and the ninth of *Deuteronomy*; we ſhall find the whole Nation of the *Iſraelites* twice under the ſame Circumſtances with *Adam* at the time of his Condemnation. Once, when they made the molten image in *Horeb*; and afterwards, when they were going to ſtone *Caleb* and *Joſhua*, within ſight of the Holy Land: at both

(*a*) *Hoſ.* xiii. 9.

which times the Nation was ſo far condemned by God, that he declared to *Moſes*; "Let me alone, that I may deſtroy Them and blot out their name from under Heaven; and I will ſmite them with Peſtilence, and diſinherit them; and I will make of Thee a nation mightier and greater than they." In like manner, had it pleaſed God to put an End to the Race of *Adam*; he might have raiſed up from the duſt *another* Race of Men, to inherit the Bleſſings which were *originally* deſigned for *Him* and his *Poſterity*.

But this offer our great Lawgiver, with a truly noble and generous Spirit, magnanimouſly refuſed: (Let any other Nation in the world produce ſuch an inſtance of diſintereſted Patriotiſm!) and upon prayer to God, that he would remember his Servants *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; and ſuggeſting that the People were his *own* people, and his *own* inheritance; which he had delivered from *Egypt*, by his mighty Power; and whoſe Iniquities he had pardoned ever ſince, by his great Mercy and Goodneſs: (All which an unmerciful Being would have looked-upon as aggravations of their Crime, rather than pleas for Pardon:) the Lord ſaid, I have pardoned according to thy Word; but, as truly as I live, all the Earth ſhall be filled with the Glory of the Lord; becauſe all thoſe Men, who have ſeen my Glory and my Miracles, which I did in *Egypt*, and in the Wilderneſs; and have tempted

tempted me theſe ten times, and have not hearkened to my Voice; ſurely they ſhall not ſee the land, which I ſware unto their Fathers: neither ſhall any of them which provoked me ſee it." Here we may obſerve; that, though the Nation deſerved Death, and God actually threatened it; yet he forgave them, upon the Interceſſion of *Moſes:* though the Arguments *Moſes* uſed were only directed to the divine Attributes of Mercy and Love, by which he had ſo long preſerved and ſaved them. And, agreeably to what we ſee here, and many other inſtances in the Scripture, God is repreſented as rewarding Virtue and Righteouſneſs in the higheſt manner that a benevolent and generous Man could wiſh for; and in a way moſt proper to encourage it; by granting, in anſwer to the *Prayer* and *Interceſſion* of a righteous though imperfect Man, and in *reward of his righteouſneſs*, the power of obtaining Bleſſings, (not improper to be pray'd for) upon his Friends and Country; and becoming a Benefactor to Mankind.

From hence I argue; that a way might poſſibly be open for the Mercy and Goodneſs of God to recover and redeem our firſt Parents from Death to which they had been devoted. If God would have ſaved *Sodom*, for the ſake of *ten* righteous perſons (*b*); If he remembred

(*b*) *Gen.* xviii. 32.

Abraham,

Abraham, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, ſo as to be merciful to their Poſterity for their *ſakes* (*c*); If he would not rend the Kingdom of *Iſrael* from *Solomon*, for his Father *David*'s ſake (*d*); If he defended *Jeruſalem* againſt the *Aſſyrians*, for his *own* ſake and for his Servant *David*'s ſake (*e*); If God not only forgave *Abimelech*, upon the prayer of *Abraham* (*f*); and the friends of *Job*, upon the prayer of *Job* (*g*): but directed the delinquents to ſeek forgiveneſs by *their* Mediation; promiſing that he would accept their prayers: In ſhort, if we find that God is always repreſented in the Scripture as *ready to forgive*; and as *taking occaſion* of being kind and merciful to his Creatures, upon every act of Penitence and Righteouſneſs; and *ready* to ſhower down his Mercies upon them, even before ſuch an opportunity appears; whenever it is conſiſtent with his *Wiſdom*; and the *end* and *deſign* of his moral *Government*: if all theſe things be conſidered ſeriouſly; there can be no reaſon to imagine him *leſs ready* to manifeſt the ſame Goodneſs and Mercy, by reſtoring Life to our firſt Parent; and bringing all his poſterity, who ſhould be fit for ſuch a State, to that Immortality; for which the race of Man was originally deſigned: and this not only for his own *Mercy's ſake*, but for the ſake of that *beloved Being*, by whom he made us; and

(*c*) *Gen.* xxvi. 24. (*d*) I *Kings* xi. 12. (*e*) II *Kings* xix. 34. (*f*) *Gen.* xx. 7. (*g*) *Job* xlii. 8.

whoſe

whoſe Subjects we are deſigned to be, in the Kingdom which he has gained for us by his Righteouſneſs; and who hath alway, from the beginning of the World, ſometimes in the Character of the Angel of *Jehovah*, under which Title he revealed himſelf in the Buſh; but more eſpecially by his Death and Sufferings in the Character of the *Meſſiah*, manifeſted the moſt affectionate Love and Regard to the whole race of Man.

But though theſe Principles are plain and intelligible, and agreeable to the Doctrines of the old Teſtament; and the Chriſtian Religion is founded upon this undeniable Truth, that the ſupreme Lord and Governor of the Univerſe has a Power, conſiſtent with all his divine Attributes to forgive fit objects of Mercy; and to confer free Grace and Bounty undeſerved, whenever it is agreeable to his Wiſdom: yet this plain Doctrine has been ſo amazingly obſcured and borne down among the defenders of Chriſtianity, by the Metaphyſical and Scholaſtical opinions which have for a long time prevailed; that, in apologizing for the Chriſtian Faith, I find myſelf not only obliged to oppoſe the Arguments of the *Jews* and *Deiſts*; but ſome of the moſt reſpectable Characters in the *Chriſtian* Church: who have endeavoured to explain the Chriſtian Scheme upon Principles, which may be proved

to

to be *falſe*; or inconſiſtent with Principles and Doctrines, which may be proved to be *true*.

Grotius, *Stillingfleet*, and other learned Men, have defended the two following propoſitions, as the fundamental Doctrines of Chriſtianity; both which are contrary to the old Teſtament, and abſolutely *falſe*. Firſt, they aſſert; that "there is a *Neceſſity* of God's vindicating his *Honour* to the World, upon the breach of his Laws; if not by the ſuffering of the Offenders themſelves, yet by the ſuffering of the Son of God, as a ſacrifice for the Expiation of Sin; by undergoing the puniſhment of *our* Iniquities(*b*):" which appears to me to be the ſame thing as to aſſert, that God is not able to forgive Sins, δωρεὰν freely.

Secondly; that a perſon, notwithſtanding his Innocency, may oblige himſelf, by an act of his own Will, to undergo that Puniſhment which *otherwiſe* he did not deſerve: which Puniſhment in that caſe will be *juſt* and agreeable to Reaſon(*i*)." At preſent I ſhall only conſider the firſt of theſe Aſſertions; leaving the other to be canvaſſed in the ſeventh Letter.

Now of all the religious Notions I ever met with, none ever appeared to me more contradictory to the Scriptures; or to the natural Notions which ſenſible Men of all Religions

(*b*) *Stillingfleet* on the Sufferings of *Chriſt*, p. 287.
(*i*) *Ibid.* p. 303.

have

have entertained of the Power and Mercy and Juſtice of the ſupreme Being, than theſe. Shall we dare to aſſert, that a juſt and a good God actually *puniſhes* the *Innocent*; and yet is not able without, not only the *conſent*, but the *actual ſufferings* of another Perſon, to *forgive* the *Penitent?* Can forgiving a *Penitent* be leſs agreeable to Rectitude, than puniſhing the *Innocent?* Will they ever perſuade a *Mahometan* to receive ſuch an unworthy notion of the divine Attributes; or think to convert a *Jew* to ſuch Doctrines, as he can prove to be falſe from the Law and the Prophets? Yet we are confidently told, with great Zeal for the honour of God, by theſe moſt learned and reſpectable Divines, that God has *no ſuch Power*; except the Son of God ſhall ſuffer as a Sacrifice for the Expiation of Sin, by undergoing the Puniſhment of our Iniquities. For there is a *neceſſity* of God's vindicating his Honour to the World, upon the breach of his Laws; ſays Bp. *Stillingfleet*.

The learned *Theophilus Gale* goes ſtill farther; and ſays, "we are not to conſider, what God "can do of his *abſolute* Juſtice or Dominion; "for by this he may let Sin paſs unpuniſhed: "but we muſt conſider, what by his *ordinate* "Juſtice and moral Conſtitution he can do. "And in this regard it is moſt true, that God is "under a *Neceſſity* of puniſhing Sin, without a

" Satisfaction; and he were inevitably *unjuſt*, " if he did not puniſh it(*k*)."

Dr. *Clarke* was not quite ſo peremptory and confident. This great Man knew; that Chriſt is never ſaid, in the New Teſtament, to be *puniſhed*; though he is ſo often ſaid to have *ſuffered* for us: and therefore does not venture to uſe that unwarrantable Word, expreſsly; but varies the Phraſe and ſoftens the Doctrine, to make it leſs liable to exception. *He* tells us; " when the Honour of God's Laws had been diminiſhed by Sin; it was *reaſonable* and *neceſſary*, (notwithſtanding God's Power and abſolute Right of forgiving; yet in reſpect of his Wiſdom in governing the World, it was reaſonable and neceſſary), there ſhould be a *Vindication* of the authority of his Laws; and therefore, in that ſenſe of Neceſſity it was *neceſſary*, either that the Sinner ſhould periſh; or ſome other Satisfaction ſhould be made in his ſtead (*l*):" which amounts to an aſſertion; that puniſhment of Sin is *always* neceſſary, in the Government of the World. But this is not true: for it may, for aught we know, be more agreeable in many inſtances to the *Wiſdom* of God in his governing the World, to *forgive*; than to *puniſh*: and in all ſuch Inſtances, Puniſhment *will* not be *neceſſary*.

(*k*) Court of the *Gentiles*, part iv. p. 369.

(*l*) Sermons, Vol. viii. p. 373. Of the Nature of the Sufferings of *Chriſt*, Serm. 137. p. 142. vol. ii. fol. ed.

From

From whence, then, does this new invented Neceſſity ariſe; which limits and reſtrains the abſolute Right and free Mercies of God? Is it a doctrine of Scripture? by no means: the Old and New Teſtament are ignorant of it. Hear what *Iſaiah* ſays; "I even I am he, ſaith the Lord; that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions, for *mine own ſake*; and will not remember thy Sins (*m*): and again; Is my hand ſhortened at all, that I cannot redeem? and have I no power to deliver (*n*)? And the new Teſtament declares, that God forgives us freely; δωρεὰν· and there is not one Text, in either of Them, that ſpeaks of the Sufferings of *Chriſt* as a *Puniſhment*; or one that ſays, they were intended to vindicate the Authority of God's Laws; much leſs mentions the neceſſity of *ſuch a Vindication*, and that God *could not* forgive Sins *without* it. This is all human invention. Dr. *Sykes* ſays, very truly; "when I look over every paſſage, that mentions the Effect of *Chriſt*'s death, or what he did, or why he ſuffer'd; I do not find the *Authority of God's Laws* mentioned among them. And can that be ſuppoſed an End of the Sufferings of *Chriſt*, which is not once mentioned to us; at the ſame time that we are immediately and directly concerned in it; and perhaps we only (*o*)?

But Dr. *Clarke* tells us, this Vindication is reaſonable and neceſſary; notwithſtanding God's

(*m*) *Iſ.* xliii. 25. (*n*) *Iſ.* l. 2. (*o*) *Sykes'* Script. Doct. p. 352.

Power and abſolute Right to forgive. Here we ſee, how this great man was embaraſſed: for he tells us, in another place—" the Juſtice of God may ſeem to be moſt highly magnified; by ſuppoſing that it puts an *abſolute Neceſſity* upon him; either of inflicting an *infinite* Puniſhment, or of demanding an *infinite* Satisfaction. But they, who ſo ſpeak, ought at the ſame time to conſider on the other hand; that they leave no room either for Goodneſs or Mercy(*p*)."—Now, if this Obſervation be *true*, as it certainly is; the neceſſity of vindicating his Laws muſt be *falſe:* for the two propoſitions are abſolutely *inconſiſtent*. In ſhort; " if the Sinner repents, there can be no *neceſſity* of Puniſhment; for the *End* is obtained, without it; and there is nothing in Puniſhment, ſave as a *Mean*, in which Goodneſs can take Content(*q*)." But let us inquire into the Nature of this ſuppoſed Neceſſity. Does it controul his Attributes, both natural and moral? Is it ſuperior to God himſelf? Is any human Lawgiver ſo reſtrained; that he cannot, upon the proper ſubmiſſion and behaviour of the Offender, forgive the tranſgreſſion of his own Laws? And is it not a perfection in God's Prerogative, to commiſerate every compaſſionable Caſe; and temper and abate the ſeverity of the Law? Is not this what we mean by

(*p*) *Clarke*'s Serm. Vol. I. p. 166. fol. Vol. II. p. 214. 8vo. (*q*) *Whichcote*'s Aphoriſms, N. 268.

Mercy?

Mercy? and if the neceſſity of vindicating his laws, deprives him of this Power; can he be ſaid to be merciful, in *any* Senſe? And are we ſure; that God is unable to forgive the ſins of imperfect Creatures, in every *other* part of the Univerſe; as well as in this puny Orb, which we inhabit; unleſs the Son of God, or ſome other Perſon, "whoſe Innocence and Dignity might make his Sufferings worthy to be accepted of God inſtead of the Puniſhment due to the Offender," ſhould be puniſhed in every *other* world as well as *this?* If God can forgive the Sins of his Creatures freely, in any *other* part of the Univerſe; he may poſſibly be able to do it *here:* for what ſhould reſtrain him?

The *Jews* in the days of *Chriſt* were well perſuaded from the Scriptures; that God alone *could* forgive Sins: but the modern Chriſtians have found-out, that this is a miſtake: and God alone *cannot* do it. But, while the Right and and Power of God to forgive is allowed on all ſides to be *abſolute*, to be founded upon the divine Nature; it muſt follow unavoidably, that the neceſſity of Puniſhing, which is contrary to this right, *cannot be abſolute*; but muſt depend upon the divine Will: and conſequently, may be executed or not; as ſhall be moſt agreeable to the divine Wiſdom. And Mr. *Gale* himſelf ſays the ſame thing in other words; "If God's "puniſhing Sin was from a Neceſſity of *Nature*,

"and

" and not from the free Conſtitution of his *Will*;
" he muſt puniſh Sin as neceſſarily, as he loves
" Himſelf: and then it will follow; that God
" cannot relaxate his penal Laws, as to the
" Time, Meaſure and Manner of puniſhing;
" yea, he cannot accept of the Satisfaction of a
" Mediator: for that is a degree of Relax-
" ation(*r*)."

Now if this Neceſſity is neither to be found in the Scripture, nor in the Nature of things; there can be no ſuch thing. Mr. *Gale* calls it a *moral* Obligation God is under to the Vindication of his Juſtice, as Ruler of the World; this, he ſays, ſome call a *natural Congruence* or *Condeſcency*; which *obliges* God to vindicate his own Juſtice: and Dr. *Clarke* ſays, it was neceſſary; in reſpect of God's governing the World.

If this be all that is mean'd by it; it might be much more intelligibly expreſſed, by ſaying; that God in his infinite Wiſdom ſees, that Puniſhment is neceſſary to carry-on the Government of the World: and this may *in general* be true. And ſo Magiſtrates alſo ſee, that Puniſhment is neceſſary to carry-on the government of Societies.—But does it follow from hence, that the Magiſtrate is under a *neceſſity* to puniſh; and that it would be *unjuſt* in him to forgive? May it not be moſt wiſe for the Magiſtrate on

(*r*) Court of the *Gentiles*, part iv. p. 369.

ſome

ſome occaſions to offer forgiveneſs to a delinquent; if he will return to his Duty, if he will diſcover his Accomplices, &c.? or more agreeable to the wiſdom of God, to forgive and reform a Penitent; rather than deſtroy him (*s*)? God himſelf declares; that he is merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thouſands, and forgiving Iniquity and Treſpaſſes and Sin(*t*). And is all this contrary to his Wiſdom, in governing the World? or is there no meaning to theſe Words? or is it poſſible, that God ſhould ſo deſcribe his own Nature; if his forgiveneſs depended upon the voluntary Sufferings of another Perſon? It remains therefore with the defenders of thoſe great Men, to prove; that forgiveneſs δωρεὰν is *always* inconſiſtent with the

(*s*) Mere *Power* is ſufficient to *deſtroy*; without Wiſdom or any moral Perfection: but *Goodneſs* and *Wiſdom* are neceſſary to *reform* and *ſave*. No created Being can be ſo fooliſh and wicked; but that the wiſdom of his Creator may place him in ſuch Circumſtances, if he pleaſes ſo to do; as will teach him by experience the impotency of his Folly and Wickedneſs, and affect him with ſuch a ſenſe of the divine Power and Perfection, as muſt in time induce him to reform his Conduct; conſiſtently with the freedom of his Will. But what length of time may be neceſſary, to produce a reformation in his principles and actions; and what diſtreſs and anguiſh of mind may be gone-through, before ſuch a change can be made in rough and ſtubborn Tempers, is terrible to conceive.

(*t*) *Ex.* xxxiv. 6, 7.

Wiſdom

Wiſdom of God in the government of the World. And if they were able to prove it, (which is impoſſible, becauſe God is merciful:) they would deſtroy the fundamental principle of *Chriſtianity*.

On the other ſide, it may with great Truth and Certainty be argued; that the Laws of God were not given, for their own ſakes; but for the ſake of *promoting Righteouſneſs*: and conſequently, when Righteouſneſs can at any time be more effectually promoted by Forgiveneſs, than by Puniſhment; there can be no neceſſity to vindicate his Laws: it would be prejudicial to the cauſe of Virtue and Righteouſneſs, which are the great ends and objects of the divine Government; and we may be certain, that the Almighty *Jehovah* will never forget or neglect, no not for a moment, the great end for which all his Laws are enacted: but if, by an act of well-timed Mercy, he can affect the nobler paſſions of Love and Gratitude, and bring us to the practice of Virtue, by gentle means, agreeable to our intelligent natures; (of which we find many inſtances in Scripture, where God mollifies the heart by Benefits; and brings forth Repentance and Amendment from Shame and Gratitude and Love:) God himſelf, as the moral Governor of the Univerſe, will *forbid* the vindication of his Laws, as *prejudicial* to his own deſigns; and a mere uſeleſs or rather miſchievous piece of Formality.

mality. And in truth, there never can be a *neceſſity* for God to puniſh; but when it is moſt *wiſe* to do ſo, of which only he is the Judge.

Mr. *Theophilus Gale* ſays; this Controverſy was on foot many hundred years ſince. For *Au'ſtine* held, that God could ſave Sinners without a Satisfaction; and *Anſelme* held, that he could not. And *Bradwardine*, by the diſtinction of God's *abſolute* and *ordinate* Power, as Rector of the World, undertakes to reconcile them. In the *former* ſenſe of an abſolute Power, he *can*; and in the *latter* ſenſe, as Rector of the World, he *cannot* ſave Sinners; but by *Chriſt*(*u*). But the Queſtion is; by which of theſe ways *will* God act? If he *can* act either by his abſolute or ordinate power, as he pleaſes; where is the *neceſſity* to *puniſh?* and, if he *cannot*, where is his *abſolute* Power? To have an abſolute Power to forgive, and be at the ſame time under a Neceſſity to puniſh; is a contradiction.—The Sophiſtry, or at leaſt the Confuſion here, ariſes from uſing the word *Neceſſity* in two different ſenſes: ſometimes, as it relates to the *natural* Attributes of God; ſuch as Power, Wiſdom, &c. which depend entirely upon his Nature, and are abſolute and unalterable, at *all* times and places; and ſometimes, as it relates to his *moral* Attributes, and the exerciſe of his Power; which

(*u*) Court of the *Gentiles*, part iv. p. 370.

depends entirely on his *Will* and free unreſtrained Volition; and this Power is exerciſed according to his divine Wiſdom at *particular* times and places, as beſt ſuits the end and deſign of his moral Government.

'Tis worth while to obſerve here; how theſe great Men, in defence of their Hypotheſis, uſe Words, inſtead of Ideas. To ſay—the Sins of Men *cannot* be forgiven freely, becauſe the Laws of God *muſt* be vindicated; may ſeem at firſt ſight to bear ſome Reaſon and Argument: but, in truth, it is a mere *Petitio Principii*; for the two parts of the propoſition are left to prove one another. He that objects to the *firſt* part, objects alſo to the *ſecond*; and we might with as much argument prove the converſe: that the Laws of God *muſt* be vindicated, becauſe the Sins of Man *cannot* be forgiven. But farther, to ſay—the *Laws* of God *muſt be vindicated*; either means the ſame as to ſay, the *breach* of God's Laws *muſt* be *puniſhed*; or it does not. If it means the ſame thing, (as it muſt do; if there be no other way of vindicating God's Laws but puniſhing the breach of them:) then what is mean'd as a Reaſon and Argument, is mere Tautology: *viz.* the Sins of Men cannot be forgiven, becauſe they muſt be puniſhed: *that is*, becauſe they cannot be forgiven. And if it does not mean the ſame thing, but there is ſome other way of vidicating God's Laws beſides puniſhing; then

then the reaſoning is falſe: and it does not follow; that, becauſe the Laws muſt be vindicated, therefore the Sinner muſt be puniſhed: for they may be vindicated in ſome other manner. But, in truth; whenever it pleaſes Almighty God to *forgive* Sin, it is contrary to Fact as well as to common Senſe, to aſſert any *Neceſſity* that the Laws of God ſhould be vindicated at all.

An Hypotheſis built upon ſuch Contradiction to the divine Attributes, muſt either ſink with it's own weight, among all men of Senſe; or will ſap the very foundation of all Revelation, that is pretended to be founded upon it.

Having now done with the unſcriptural Opinion of the *Chriſtians*, who teach that God has not the Power to forgive Sins freely; or without the *puniſhment* of the Sinner, or of a Mediator in his ſtead; I am immediately called-upon on the other hand, to anſwer an objection of the *Deiſts*; that God cannot forgive Sins *by*, or *for* the ſake, or at the *Interceſſion*, of a *Mediator*; which is no leſs oppoſite to the *Chriſtian* Doctrine. Mr. *Chubb* is ſo extravagantly ſanguine upon this ſubject, that he tells us; "If the Apoſtles themſelves preached any ſuch doctrine, they were miſtaking; and even a miraculous Confirmation of it, would not make it credible." And indeed, as he underſtands it, he may bid defiance to whom he pleaſes; for he entirely miſtakes the Senſe of the Doctrine revealed;

and it is impoſſible that the Apoſtles ſhould have underſtood it, in ſuch a ſenſe as He does.

He quotes the Texts in the Margin(*x*), and particularly *Eph.* iv. 32. to ſhew it to be the doctrine of the Apoſtles, that we are forgiven for *Chriſt's ſake*; and then objects in this manner—"If the Apoſtles did teach this doctrine; "*viz.* that it is upon *Chriſt*'s account, and for "*his ſake*; that God forgives penitent Offenders "—then in this as they greatly departed from "the Truth, ſo they went greatly beyond the "deſign and intent of their Maſter; by making

(*x*) *Chubb* on *Redemption*, p. 97. *Rom.* v. 9, 10. Much more then, being now juſtified by his *blood*, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by (διὰ) by the *death* of his Son, &c.

Eph. i. 7. *Col.* i. 14. In whom we have *Redemption* through (διὰ) *blood*; even the forgiveneſs of Sins. *Eph.* iv. 32. Forgiving one another, even as God for *Chriſt*'s ſake (ἐν Χριστῷ) hath forgiven You—*Heb.* ix. 12. By (διὰ) his own *blood* he entered in once into the holy place; having obtained eternal *Redemption* for Us.

I *Pet.* ii. 24. Who his own ſelf bare our Sins in his *Body* on the Tree. iii. 18, For *Chriſt* alſo hath once ſuffered for Sins, the juſt for the unjuſt; that he might bring us to God.

I *John* i. 7. But, if We walk in the light, as he is in the light; We have fellowſhip with one another: and the *blood* of *Chriſt* cleanſeth us from all Sin. *Rev.* i. 5. Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our Sins in his own *blood*—v. 9. For thou waſt *ſlain*; and haſt *redeemed* us to God by thy *blood*.

"*that*

" *that* the *ground* of God's mercy to penitent " Sinners, which *Chriſt* had not made ſo: and " therefore, this Doctrine is no part of *Chriſti-* " *anity*." And again, he ſays; " It may be " urged, that the Apoſtles taught this Doctrine; " that God was *made* placable or merciful to " penitent Sinners, by the Sufferings and Death " of *Chriſt*: as their Writings do plainly ſhew."

But, it muſt be obſerved here; that Mr. *Chubb* has never proved, nor attempted to prove, that forgiving Sins *for Chriſt's ſake*, is *equivalent* to *making* his Sufferings the *ground* of God's mercy; or to *making* God placable or merciful: though he conſiders them as ſynonymous Propoſitions: whereas in truth they are extremely different.

And, if Mr. *Chubb* had ſtudied the language of the Old Teſtament; and obſerved, that God is ſaid to do that, *for the ſake* of an Interceſſor, which he deſigned to do, *prior* to his Interceſſion; as when He directed *Abimelech* to ſeek for pardon by the prayers of *Abraham*, and the friends of *Job* by the prayer of *Job*; he could never have ſo miſunderſtood the Words of theſe Texts: but muſt have ſeen; that neither the Merits of *Abraham*, nor of *Job*, were the *grounds* of God's Mercy, nor that which *made* him placable or merciful; but that God was ready, and willing, and deſirous to forgive, before any ſuch prayers were made; and only waited, to do it in ſuch a

manner

manner as might beſt ſhew his regard to Righteouſneſs.

Mr. *Chubb* therefore has underſtood the expreſſion, *for Chriſt's ſake*, in a ſenſe of his own; and not in the ſenſe of Scripture: and I will add farther; that he has underſtood it in a *forced* Senſe, contrary to common uſe. For, when it is ſaid; that a perſon does a Benefit, or forgives an injury; upon the *Interceſſion*, or for the *Sake*, of another; it is never mean'd, that ſuch Interceſſion *made* the perſon apply'd-to either benevolent, or placable; nor can it be intended to depreciate his natural diſpoſition to forgiveneſs, or to exclude any *other* motives and conſiderations, which might perſuade to that *particular* act of benevolence: but it barely means, that it was a *motive* to it. And one would imagine; that a perſon well inclined to Revelation, would rather have explained theſe words in any manner they are poſſibly capable of, than in a ſenſe ſo big with Abſurdity and Contradiction: for it is equally abſurd and antichriſtian and antitheiſtical, to ſay, that any Combination of Circumſtances can *make* God merciful or placable; as to ſay, that they can *make* him juſt and good and true. The Attributes of God are eternal and unchangeable, and are not to be affected by the conduct of *any* Being: but his providential Acts *may be*, and certainly *are*, affected by the Virtues or Vices of his Creatures; and, if they were not

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ſo affected, he could not be a moral Governor; by the exerciſe of a judicial Providence. Repentance is a *cauſe* or *motive* to forgiveneſs; but it does not *make* God placable or merciful(*y*).

The true ſenſe of the Words muſt be taken from the Scripture; where the Phraſe [*for the ſake of*] is uſed in a popular ſenſe, and adapted to common language. Logical and Philoſophical Writers may take what pains they pleaſe to diſtinguiſh nicely and preciſely the different kinds of Cauſes which they ſpeak of; as the firſt and *original* Cauſe, which in every thing is God himſelf; the *miniſterial* Cauſes by which he brings about his decrees; the *efficient* Cauſe, by which they are performed; the *final* cauſes or ends, for which they are deſign'd: But theſe nice diſtinctions and ſubtleties are not uſed in Scripture. On the contrary, whatever act is performed, let the *cauſes*, which combined to effect it, be ever ſo numerous; the purpoſes, deſigned by it, ever ſo various; the accidental effects, ever ſo oppoſite to the ends propoſed; they are all ſpoken-of in the Scripture in the ſame language, as the *cauſe* or *reaſon*, by which, or for which, or for the ſake of which, the action was performed. Thus, with regard to the *efficient* Cauſe; we are ſaid to be ſaved by Faith, by Works, by the Word of God, by Baptiſm, by Hope, by Grace,

(*y*) See *Jer.* xxxvi. 3.

by

by the Death of *Chriſt*, by his Life, by the words of St. *Peter*, by the words of St. *Paul*, by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, by calling on the name of the Lord, by enduring to the end, &c. by all theſe cauſes ſingly, we are ſaid to be ſaved, in the *new* Teſtament: and yet it is moſt certain, that not one of them muſt be ſo underſtood as to exclude all the reſt.

The *final* Cauſes and accidental Effects are likewiſe ſpoken-of in Scripture, in one and the ſame manner; and we are not only told, that *Chriſt* came into the World to ſave the World(*z*); and to fulfil the Law and the Prophets (*a*); and to give his Life a Ranſom for many (*b*); but alſo that he came, not to ſend Peace, but a Sword; and to ſet a Man at variance againſt his Father, and the Daughter againſt her Mother(*c*); though the Intent, for which he undoubtedly came, was to reconcile and unite the whole world in the bonds of Amity and Love; and theſe were only *accidental* Conſequences, which thwarted his deſigns(*d*). I ſhall add one inſtance, to ſhew; that

(*z*) *Jo.* iii. 17. (*a*) *Mat.* v. 17. (*b*) *Mat.* xx. 28. (*c*) *Mat.* x. 34.

(*d*) See Dr. *Sam. Clarke* on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, 7th edit. p. 421. where he gives many inſtances in proof of this: particularly with regard to the expreſſions of Propheſies, this was done that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the Prophet. Whereas, on the contrary, the thing was not to be done becauſe it was

that Cauſes and Effects are ſpoken-of in the ſame lax ſenſe, in the *old* Teſtament. The Angel of God declares to *Abraham*, when he would have offered-up his Son *Iſaac*; "By my ſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord; for *becauſe* thou haſt done this thing, and haſt not witheld thy Son, thine only Son; that in bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy ſeed as the ſtars of the Heavens, and as the ſand which is upon the ſea ſhore; and thy ſeed ſhall poſſeſs the gate of his enemies; and in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed; *becauſe* thou haſt obeyed my voice(*e*). Here the promiſe is made to *Abraham*, *becauſe* he did not withold his Son, his only Son; and yet it is very certain, that it was made to him *long before*; even before that Son was born (*f*): So that it can mean no more, than a *freſh* motive for performing what had been before promiſed to him.

The caſe is juſt the ſame; when it is ſaid more expreſsly, that any thing is done for *the ſake* of a *thing* or *Perſon*. Thus it is ſaid(*g*), Believe me for [διὰ] the very work's ſake; *that is*, upon *account-of* my works: and the general Senſe is no

was predicted, but predicted becauſe it was to be done. So the words, THAT ſuch a thing may be, do not ſignify the intention, to the end that it may be, but merely the Event, ſo that it will be.

(*e*) *Gen.* xxii. 16. (*f*) *Gen.* xii. 3. (*g*) *John* xiv. 11.

more; for the words may be taken in a good or bad ſenſe. When it is ſaid, every one that forſaketh houſes, &c. for my name's *ſake* (*h*); [ἕνεκεν] it means, out of *regard* to my name; but when it is ſaid, all theſe things will they do unto you, for my name's *ſake* (*i*); [διὰ] it means the direct contrary; or, out of *hatred* to my name. And moreover, when a thing is done for the ſake of *one* thing; it may alſo be done for the ſake of an *other:* for theſe cauſes are not ſuppoſed to be inconſiſtent, but merely ſeparate motives. Thus, St. *Paul* ſays; to whom I forgave, I forgave it for your ſakes(*k*). They came, not for *Jeſus*' ſake only [διὰ] (*l*); but that they might ſee *Lazarus* alſo. And God is ſaid to have defended *Jeruſalem* for his own ſake, and for his ſervant *David*'s ſake(*m*). And *Herod* to have beheaded *John*, for the Oath's ſake; and them that ſat with him at meat(*n*). And God does the ſame thing for his *own* ſake, and his *word*'s ſake, and his *mercy*'s ſake, and his *truth*'s ſake, and his ſervant *David*'s ſake: and ſometimes the cauſes are *reciprocal*; as when God is ſaid to exalt the Kingdom of *David*, for *Iſrael*'s ſake; and at other times to bleſs the *Iſraelites*, for *David*'s ſake. And *Chriſt* is ſaid to ſuffer for *our* ſake; and *we* to ſuffer for *his* ſake(*o*).

(*h*) *Mat.* xix. 29. (*i*) *John* xv. 21. (*k*) II *Cor.* ii. 10. (*l*) *John* xii. 9. (*m*) *Kings* xi. 12, 13. *Iſ.* xxxvii. 35. (*n*) *Mat.* xiv. 9. (*o*) *Phil.* i. 9.

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We ſee then, what a great Liberty was open to Mr. *Chubb* of interpreting the expreſſion, for *Chriſt's ſake*; without fixing it to the moſt improbable one which the words are capable of.

However, it ſhould be remarked; that there is no expreſſion, in the Greek Teſtament; which neceſſarily ſignifies, that our Sins are forgiven us for *Chriſt's ſake*. The words, which Mr. *Chubb* particularly fixes upon, are theſe; "As God for *Chriſt*'s ſake hath forgiven You:" but the original is, as God hath forgiven you in *Chriſt*; [καθὼς καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐχαρισατο ὑμῖν(*p*)]. The action is here ſuppoſed to be paſſed; and, conſequently, relates to the forgiveneſs of the firſt *Chriſtians*; when they received the Faith. Mr. *Pyle* makes the following remark upon the Text —"Though it be true, that God forgives Men for *Chriſt*'s ſake; yet this ſeems not to be the ſtrict meaning of ἐν Χριστῷ, in this place. It is in *Chriſt*, or by *Chriſt*; as in *Heb.* i. 1. [God] hath ſpoken to us [ἐν υἱῷ] by his Son; and hath accepted us [ἐν ἀγαπητῷ· it ſhould have been ἠγαπημένῳ] in the beloved. *Eph.* i. 6. The Senſe ſeems plainly to be; God forgives, in or through *Chriſt*; *viz.* by him preaching and declaring and granting Forgiveneſs upon Man's Repentance.

But there is another Senſe, in which we may be ſaid to be ſaved or forgiven for *Chriſt*'s ſake;

(*p*) *Eph.* iv. 32.

that lies more open to Mr. *Chubb*'s Objections, and againſt which he ſeems particularly to point his Arguments: *to wit*, that we are forgiven by his *Interceſſion*; or in anſwer to it.

Now though I *think*, we are no where ſaid *expreſsly* in the Scripture to be forgiven *for the ſake of* Chriſt's *Interceſſion*; and the word ἐντυγχάνει (*q*) rather relates to his care over us, in managing our affairs as a mediator; than any actual addreſs to God in our behalf: yet, as we are *certain*, that he did pray for us; we may be ſure, his Prayers were not *uſeleſs*: and, conſequently, his Interceſſion was one *cauſe* or *motive* of our Salvation, and a motive, which does by no means interfere with the free grace of God; which is the *original* or firſt mover in our Salvation; or the power of *Chriſt*, which is the *efficient* cauſe.

There are many things in *Prayer*, ſo agreeable to our Nature; that they muſt be very ſtrong arguments indeed, that can prove it of no effect to gain our wiſhes and deſires. Our Gratitude naturally expreſſes itſelf in Thankſgiving: and every kind of Excellence demands from all intelligent Beings an Acknowledgment or Con-

(*q*) ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, *makes interceſſion for us*; by negociating and managing, as our friend and agent, all the affairs relating to our Salvation. *Taylor* on the *Romans*, viii. 27. In *Acts* xxv. 24. it ſignifies to deal-with, in a bad Senſe.

feſſion

feſſion of it; which, when referred to God, is Praiſe: for, to *praiſe* God, is only to *ſpeak the Truth* of him, and declare what we ſee and know of him; and our Dependence on any one ſo naturally expreſſes itſelf in Petition, that it is looked-upon as a neceſſary act in the Dependent, be the Patron ever ſo well inclined to gratify him: becauſe it is fit and right; that he, who receives a Favour, *as a Dependent*, ſhould by ſome overt-act expreſs, that he does not expect it, *as his Right and Due*; but as an act of Grace and Favour: and therefore, when God had promiſed by the prophet *Ezekiel*, how abundantly he would at laſt bleſs them with ſpiritual and temporal bleſſings; after all he adds: "I will yet for all this be inquired at by the houſe of *Iſrael*, to do it for them(*r*)." And, if this were not the caſe, God would not have encouraged us to pray to him; nor, without ſuch Hopes, would *Chriſt* himſelf have prayed: for Prayer without Hope is mere empty Sound.

I ſhall therefore conſider our Saviour's Interceſſion, in the ſenſe in which Prayer has been uſed by all good men, whether Chriſtians, Jews or Heathens; as a *motive* and *reaſon* with the ſupreme *Jehovah* to grant us our requeſts. And this notion of Prayer is founded, not only upon the Authority of the Apoſtles, but of *Chriſt*

(*r*) *Ezek.* xxxvi. 37.

himſelf.

himſelf. So that Mr. *Chubb*'s objections will reach farther than, I imagine, he intended. St. *John* ſays, This is the Confidence we have in him; (*i. e.* in God) that, if we aſk any thing *according to his will*, he heareth us (*s*): Whatſoever we aſk, we receive of him; becauſe we keep his Commandments, and do thoſe things which are pleaſing in his ſight (*t*): and *Chriſt* himſelf ſays, All things whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive (*u*). And the effect of Prayer is not confined to ourſelves, but extended to all men: and if we are commanded to pray for one another; for Kings, and all that are in Authority (*x*); and particularly for our Friends and Brethren (*y*): what reaſonable objection can be made to the Interceſſion of *Chriſt* for *us all*; whether we be conſidered as his *Subjects*, or his *Brethren?* Indeed, it would be inconceivable; that *Chriſt*, who frequently ſpent whole nights in Prayer, ſhould never pray for the Succeſs of his Miniſtry (*z*); or that God Almighty ſhould not bleſs him with Succeſs, in anſwer to his Prayers (*a*); that *his own* Pleaſure might proſper in his hand (*b*).

(*s*) I *John* v. 14. (*t*) I *John* iii. 22. (*u*) *Mat.* xxi. 22. *Mark* xi. 24. *Luke* xi. 9. *John* xiv. 13. xv. 16. xvi. 23, 24. (*x*) I *Tim.* ii. 1, 2. (*y*) I *John* v. 16. (*z*) *John* xvii. (*a*) *Iſ.* xlix. 6. (*b*) *Iſ.* liii. 10.

If

If it be objected to this; that the Prayers of the Righteous can never change the deſigns of God, who is *unchangeable*, it is allowed: but we have no reaſon to believe, the Deſigns of God are ever *abſolutely* determined: except, where he has *declared* them to be ſo; or when it neceſſarily follows from his Attributes.

But let us conſider the Nature of Prayer and Interceſſion, in theſe three Caſes.

1. In regard to ſuch events, as are unfix'd and undetermined by God; and indifferent.

2. In regard to ſuch, as are already determined contrary to our requeſts.

3. In regard to ſuch events, as are agreeable to the Will of God; and ſuch as he approves of.

In many very intereſting affairs of this world, we know by Revelation, that the Will of God is frequently *undetermined*, and *conditional*, and *dependent upon* the good or ill behaviour of ſocieties and private men. Thus God ſpeaks to the *Iſraelites*; If *ye walk* in my Statutes, then will I give Peace—but, if ye *will not* hearken unto me, then will I ſet my face againſt you—and, if ye *will not* be reformed, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I alſo walk contrary unto you in fury; and ye ſhall eat the fleſh of your Sons(*c*), &c. This twenty-ſixth chapter

(*c*) *Lev.* xxvi.

of

of *Leviticus* is entirely *conditional*, and regards the whole *Jewiſh* Nation; and conſequently, the decree to reward or puniſh them could not be *fix*'d and *abſolute* either way, when theſe Promiſes and Threats were revealed.

If our Nation had obeyed God, He would have extended their Empire; but, as they did not, He raiſed-up the *Aſſyrians*, *Babylonians*, &c. to afflict and puniſh them. The ſame uncertain and conditional ſtate of events, with regard to the whole *Jewiſh* Nation, is very remarkable in the Song of *Moſes*(*d*). And, if ſuch great Events as theſe are *undetermined* and conditional, in which whole Empires are concerned; the ſmaller ones, which were only neceſſary to bring about the greater; and all the conſequences of theſe greater events, muſt alſo be undetermined; and the ſame conditional Providence muſt unavoidably extend in like manner to Individuals: and ſo it is declared in many inſtances——as particularly, when *Jeremiah* declares to *Zedekiah*, Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts; If thou wilt aſſuredly go forth to the King of *Babylon*'s Princes, then thy Soul ſhall live; and this City ſhall not be burned with Fire(*e*). And, if this be the true State of the Caſe, the Subject of Prayer is infinite; and the benefit of it may be ſo too, without ſuppoſing

(*d*) *Deut.* xxxii. See alſo *Jer.* xxii. 3. 4. (*e*) *Jer.* xxxviii. 17. *Acts* xxvii. 31, 32. See I *Sam.* xiii. 13.

it

it to produce any change in the Will of God; as will more clearly appear, from the nature of Cauſes and Effects.

God is the original Cauſe of every effect; and directs all Actions, in their ultimate tendency, to ſome great and good and wiſe End: and in general, if not always, carries-on his deſigns by his Creatures; in order to employ, amend, and improve Them. And, as every Action may have many different Conſequences; and He ſees the ſeveral Uſes, that can be made of every one of them: the ſame Act, which ſerves to complete *one* purpoſe, may be ſo directed by his Wiſdom and Power; as to begin, carry-on, or complete *many others* at the ſame time: and every Effect, that is thus brought-about, becomes a Cauſe to carry-on the deſigns of God ſtill farther; and the whole Univerſe is by theſe means kept in action in all its parts at once, both as Cauſe and Effect (*f*); and the deſigns of God move forward by his ſuperintendence, and his interpoſition, whenever he pleaſes, to that ultimate great and good and wiſe end; as certainly, as if it were a ſingle Atom, impreſſed in any given Direction; and yet conſiſtently with

(*f*) The tracing the Chain of Cauſes is the moſt noble Purſuit of Philoſophy; but we meet with no Cauſe, but what is in itſelf to be conſidered as an Effect; and are able to number but few links of the Chain. *Maclaurin*, account of Sir *I. N.* p. 17.

the free Will of his Creatures: For, if the Cauſes, which operate at any given Time, are not *ſufficient* to effect his purpoſe; He can combine or produce *others* that *are:* And as every ſingle effect may be produced by an infinitely various combination of Circumſtances: (ſuppoſe the deſtruction of the Temple, or the building it up again) theſe may be determined for a long time before; and yet that *very Time*, the *Perſons* concerned, and the *ſeveral Cauſes* neceſſary to bring about theſe things, may continue *uncertain and arbitrary*; till near the time of their Accompliſhment. Thus, a *Nebuchadnezzar* may be ſuddenly raiſed-up for the Deſtruction of the Temple; or a *Cyrus*, for its Reſtoration. An inſtance of this we find in the Caſe of *Saul*; when *Samuel* declares to him—"Now would the Lord have eſtabliſhed thy Kingdom upon *Iſrael* for ever; but now thy Kingdom ſhall not continue: the Lord hath ſought him a man after his own Heart, &c(*g*).

And if it ſhould ſo happen, that the accompliſhment of his deſigns, in any *one* out of a thouſand combinations of circumſtances, by which it might be completed, ſhould add to the happineſs of ſuch men, as *Moſes*, *Daniel*, or *Job*; this Conſideration may be of ſufficient weight with God, to determine the Event in compliance

(*g*) I *Sam.* xiii. 13, &c.

with

with their Prayers; rather than in any way, not attended with ſo good an effect. Thus we find the City of *Zoar* was ſaved, at the inſtance of righteous *Lot*(*b*). And we may be always certain, that an Almighty and all-perfect Being will never act in an *arbitrary* manner; when it is *poſſible* to act otherwiſe: or where the action may be ſo directed by him, as may tend to the reward and encouragement of Virtue. And thus the Subject as well as the Benefit of Prayer may be infinite.

I ſhall only obſerve farther, upon this head; that the unalterable decree of God to judge every man according to his works, as a righteous Judge and moral Governor; does by no means interfere with his conferring whatever Benefits he pleaſes, as an all-powerful Creator: in reſpect of which his determinations may be always open to the Prayers of the Righteous, to the very time of their Completion.

2. I ſhall conſider Prayer, with regard to ſuch events; as are already determined contrary to our Requeſts.

And in this caſe it is certain, that our Prayers will not be granted: And therefore in the Scriptures we are ordered not to make ſuch things the Subject of our Prayers. For thus ſaith the Lord to *Jeremiah:* Pray not thou for this Peo-

(*b*) *Gen.* xix. 20.

ple—for I will not hear them, when they cry unto me for their trouble(*i*). And again; thus ſaid the Lord unto me: Pray not for this people, for their good(*k*). And again; then ſaid the Lord unto me: Though *Moſes* and *Samuel* ſtood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this People: caſt them out of my Sight, and let them go forth. And it ſhall come to paſs; if they ſhall ſay unto thee, Whither ſhall We go forth? then thou ſhalt tell them, Thus ſaith the Lord; Such as are for Death, to Death; and ſuch as are for the Sword, to the Sword; and ſuch as are for the Famine, to the Famine; and ſuch as are for the Captivity, to the Captivity(*l*). And the new Teſtament ſpeaks in the ſame manner(*m*); agreeably to the Example of *Chriſt*(*n*).

3. Let us conſider the effect of Prayer, with regard to ſuch events; as are *agreeable* to the Will of God: or ſuch as He approves of. And here it is objected; that all ſuch things, as are *agreeable* to the Will of God, will certainly be accompliſhed; whether we pray or not: and therefore, in this caſe, our Prayers will be as *uſeleſs*; as when we pray for things *improper*. But this Objection is founded on a miſtaken notion; that the Will of God is always *abſolute*: whereas it is frequently only *conditional*.

(*i*) *Jer.* xi. 14. (*k*) *Jer.* xiv. 11. (*l*) *Jer.* xv. 1, 2. (*m*) *John* v. 16, 17. (*n*) *Jo.* xvii. 9.

There

There is no doubt but, in all caſes, where the Will of God is abſolute; (as in the Reſurrection of the Dead, both good and bad;) it will certainly be accompliſhed, whether we pray or not. But, when it is the deſign of God, that Mankind ſhould bring down bleſſings upon themſelves, as his dependents and creatures; by the propriety of their behaviour in their addreſſes to him, as their Creator and Benefactor; this End could not be anſwered in any other manner, than by granting his Bleſſings in anſwer to their Prayers: For Bleſſings, given in reward of Virtue and Piety, are the higheſt encouragements to the practiſe of Virtue and Piety. And therefore, when the Deiſt argues; that, if it is agreeable to the Will of God to grant Salvation to Mankind; he will grant it, without a Mediator: and, if it be not agreeable to his Will to grant it; he will not grant it, for the ſake of a Mediator: he miſtakes a *conditional* decree for an *abſolute* one; and argues as weakly, as if he were to conclude; that, if it were agreeable to the Will of God to grant us a plentiful Harveſt, he would grant it without our labour in plowing and ſowing; and, if it were not his Will, he would not grant it by means of it: or, as Dr. *Richard Price* expreſſes the ſame thought in a better manner; if it is *fit*, that our Sins ſhould be forgiven; God will forgive

give us, if we do not repent; and, if it is *unfit*, our Repentance will be of no uſe.

There are many inſtances in Scripture; where we ſee, as plainly as in theſe; that the particular *manner*, in which the Providence of God acts, is as *neceſſary*, as the event propoſed. So that, if it was not done in that particular manner, it would not be done at all. This is equally remarkable, in natural, as in revealed Religion. We know, without the help of Revelation; that it is agreeable to the Will of God, that the diſtreſſes of Mankind ſhould be relieved; and yet we frequently ſee them left to the precarious Benevolence of their fellow-Creatures, whether they ſhall be relieved or not: and, if they are not relieved by *them*, they are not relieved *at all*. In the Caſe of Revelation, I ſhall Inſtance the affair of *Naaman* the *Syrian*. God was well pleaſed, that he ſhould be healed of his Leproſy; but he was not willing, that it ſhould be done; except in *one particular manner:* which might at the ſame time ſerve the cauſe of Righteouſneſs, by bringing Honour and Reverence to the God of *Iſrael*. *Abana* and *Pharphar* were as famous, as any of the Rivers of *Iſrael*. Could he not waſh in Them, and be clean? yes, certainly he might; if the deſign of God had been no more than to *heal him:* or it might have been done, as *Naaman* expected, by the Prophet's ſtriking his hand over the place; without any waſhing,

waſhing, or even any appearance of the hand of Providence. But the *healing* Him was not the only deſign of God, nor the moſt important one; though it was the moſt remarkable event: God had a moral end in view, which could not be brought about by any of the above methods; and the *manner* of the Cure was of more importance in the deſigns of God, than the *Cure itſelf:* the effect being produced for the ſake of manifeſting to the whole Kingdom of *Syria* the great Power of the God of *Iſrael:* by which the Cure was performed. It does not therefore follow; that, becauſe it is agreeable to the Will of God to grant a Petition, or diſpenſe a Favour; for *Chriſt*'s ſake, or upon account of his Interceſſion; that he would have diſpenſed the ſame Favour in any other manner: for perhaps there was no other way, in which it could be done, conſiſtent with Wiſdom and the Cauſe of Righteouſneſs.

And, if Mr. *Chubb* had not been greatly embaraſſed with the notion, that the Doctrine of Forgiveneſs for *Chriſt's ſake* was to be underſtood in ſuch a manner; as to *prevent*, or rather *pervert*, the juſt and impartial Judgement of the great Day; (by declaring the wicked to be juſt, by a mere act of Grace and Favour, and contrary to Fact;) there is no reaſon to believe, he would have made any objection to our Salvation for *his Sake:* Becauſe in the ſenſe I am conſidering it, as free from thoſe difficulties; he has plainly

plainly argued in behalf of the *Chriſtian* Doctrine, though he was not aware of it: by aſſerting, that "God may, if he pleaſes, ſhew kindneſs to his Creatures, independent of all Merit(*o*)." A Conceſſion, which is moſt certainly true; or elſe there would be no Creation, nor Forgiveneſs: but it overturns all the Objections he has made upon this Subject; as far as the true *Chriſtian* Doctrine is concerned. For, if God can ſhew Kindneſs to Mankind, *independent* of their Merit; He can certainly ſhew the ſame or greater Kindneſs to them, if it ſhould in any degree promote the Joy or Honour of his beloved Son; whom he loves and eſteems: and therefore God may advance the Joy and Honour of *Chriſt*, in *this* way; as well as in *any other*, that would be equally agreeable to him; and Mankind may be bleſſed for the *ſake of Chriſt*, *independent* of their own Merit: and, if *Chriſt* ſhould petition for ſuch a Bleſſing to them, as a Favour and Reward to Himſelf; the Grant might be in anſwer to his Petition. And nothing could be objected to this, but their being improper Objects of ſuch Favour; which I ſhall conſider preſently.

Let the queſtion lie, as it actually happened between Man and Man; and then I argue—if *David* might confer Favours upon *Chimham* the Son of *Barzillai*, *independent* of his Merit; and

(*o*) Inquiry concerning *Redemption*, p. 92.

was

was at the ſame time willing to grant ſuch a favour to *Barzillai* himſelf, as ſhould be moſt *agreeable* to him; and *Barzillai* ſhould intercede for a favour to his *ſon*; there can be no reaſon given, why ſuch a bleſſing ſhould be witheld. And this was the fact, intirely agreeable to our notions of Rectitude and Propriety; when *Barzillai* the *Gileadite* came down from *Rogelim*, and went over *Jordan* with *David*, to conduct him over *Jordan*; to whom when the King offered a reward, he refuſed it for Himſelf: but Behold, ſays he, thy Servant *Chimham*, let him go over with my Lord the King; and do to Him what ſhall ſeem good unto Thee(*p*). Now there can be no good reaſon given, why *Chimham* ſhould not receive the Favours upon his Father's Interceſſion. But Mr. *Chubb* ſays, upon the parellel Caſe in our Redemption by *Chriſt*; "No—the Reward would be placed upon a wrong object(*q*)." But this is not true. For, though the Son receives a Bleſſing, as a Favour; it is no *Reward* to Him: but as much a *free Gift*, as if there had been no Interceſſion made. The *Reward* is the *Father*'s; and in that Senſe the King conſidered it, in his anſwer: *Chimham* ſhall go over with me; and I will do unto Him, that which ſhall ſeem good unto *Thee:* and whatſoever thou ſhalt require of me, that ſhall I do for *Thee*. And, in like manner,

(*p*) H *Sam.* xix. 31, 37, 38. (*q*) *Chubb*, p. 93.

the Bleſſings beſtowed on Mankind are conſidered in the Scripture, as a Reward to *Chriſt*; and *a Joy, that was ſet before Him.*

And therefore, when Mr. *Chubb* adds; that, on ſuch a ſuppoſition, the abſence of Virtue would be favoured; while Virtue itſelf would go unrewarded: it may be anſwered, from his own Words; "that God may ſhew Mercy to his Creatures, *independent* of all Merit;" and this is the ſame thing as to ſay, that the abſence of Virtue may be favoured; which he here objects-to as improper. But Virtue does not go unrewarded; if the Father receives a Reward and Satisfaction, in the Favours beſtowed upon the Son. And therefore it may be true, for any thing this Writer hath advanced to the contrary; that *our* Sins may be forgiven for the ſake of a Mediator, who loved us and gave himſelf for us; and upon *his* account, as a thing agreeable to *him*, and as a reward of *his* meritorious Obedience, and in anſwer to *his* Interceſſion. And yet theſe things can neither ſingly nor collectively be conſidered by the Apoſtles, as the *ground* of God's Mercy; or that which *made* him placable or merciful: becauſe they all declare, that God himſelf firſt planned the method of Forgiveneſs in this manner; and ſent his Son, of his own free grace and favour, to execute it: and conſequently, was *placable* and *merciful*, *prior* to any ſuch Mediation or Interceſſion.

But

But here it is objected; that "forgiveneſs of Sin is not of the ſame nature with other Favours or Bleſſings; becauſe it depends upon the State and Temper of the Perſons concerned: So that, if it be in the nature of the thing *right*, that God ſhould pardon penitent offenders; then he *will* certainly do it; and he will do it for this reaſon, becauſe it is *right* that he ſhould: this motive being ſufficient to determine the divine Will, to do what is right and fit, excluſive of all other motives or conſiderations whatſoever: and, if it be in the nature of the thing *wrong*, that God ſhould pardon penitent offenders; then it is moſt certain, that God *will not* pardon them; and he will not do it for this reaſon, *viz.* becauſe it is wrong and unfit that he ſhould: nor will any conſideration prevail with him to act thus; it being morally impoſſible that the Merits of ten thouſand Redeemers, or any Application or Interceſſion to him, ſhould prevail with him to do what is *wrong*."

Now if we examine, how far the Chriſtian and Deiſt are agreed; in what Mr. *Chubb* has here laid-down, as an objection to our Forgiveneſs by a Mediator; we ſhall eaſily ſee, that he has entirely miſtaken the true State of the Caſe.

1. Then, it is agreed between the Chriſtian and the Deiſt; that no Conſiderations whatſoever will prevail with God to act contrary to Rectitude. And

2. It is agreed between the Chriſtian and Deiſt, that it is conſiſtent with Rectitude to forgive penitent Sinners; theſe being the only proper objects of forgiveneſs.

3. From hence, it follows; that, unleſs it can be proved, that the *Chriſtian* Scriptures teach a Doctrine contrary to this; *viz.* that God will, for the ſake of a Mediator, forgive the impenitent and obſtinate Sinner; all that is here ſaid by Mr. *Chubb* is no more an objection to Chriſtianity, than to Deiſm. But this Doctrine can neither be proved from the Forgiveneſs of Sins, when the Goſpel was firſt revealed; nor from the account which is given of the day of Judgment. For, when the Goſpel was firſt preached, thoſe only were forgiven; who repented of their former ſins, and received the *Chriſtian* doctrine to be the rule of their future Conduct: And, at the day of Judgment, it is plainly revealed, that we ſhall be judged according to our Works; and the wicked ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment, but the righteous into Life eternal.

Here then we find; that, though Forgiveneſs of Sin depends upon the ſtate and temper of the Perſons concerned; yet, as it regards none but *Penitents*, whom it is *right* and *fit* to forgive; it is of the ſame nature *in this reſpect* with all other Bleſſings, which it is *right* and *fit* to grant: And all that remains to be ſettled between the Chriſtian and Deiſt is; not whether God will, forgive

for

for the ſake of a Mediator, thoſe whom it is *wrong* to forgive; (as Mr. *Chubb* here ſeems to ſuggeſt;) but whether he will, for the ſake of a Mediator, forgive thoſe who alone are *the proper objects* of Forgiveneſs. The *act* of Forgiveneſs is therefore ſuppoſed to be right, both by the Chriſtian and Deiſt; and they only differ in the *method* of it.

And here I think, we may ſafely venture to argue; that, when it pleaſes God to forgive penitent Sinners, he will chooſe to do it in ſuch a way; as will appear both to Men and Angels, (when they underſtand it) to diſcourage all preſumptuous Hopes in a ſinful Life upon that account; and promote an Obedience to his commands for the future. And nothing could be ſo proper to this purpoſe; as to manifeſt, that God was the *Patron* of Righteouſneſs and the *Rewarder* of it; by forgiving only the *Penitent*, and rewarding the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, ſo far beyond all human conception, with the godlike powers of raiſing the dead, forgiving Sin, and giving eternal life. For it is a known Maxim in Government; that Obedience to the Laws may be encouraged, either by rewarding the Good; or puniſhing the Bad; and, though *human* Governments are not able to reward every one, that is obedient to its Laws; and therefore we generally ſee their Laws are guarded by puniſhing the Offender; yet it is not ſo with God:

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He can promote Obedience to his Laws either way. And it was for want of applying this Obſervation to the preſent ſubject, that *Grotius*, Bp. *Stillingfleet*, and other learned men have imagined they ſaw a *moral Neceſſity* that God ſhould *vindicate* the laws of his Government, either by the puniſhment of the Sinner; or of ſome other in his ſtead: not conſidering that the Laws of his Government, and the cauſe of Righteouſneſs might be more effectually ſecured in ſome caſes, by *rewarding the Righteous*; and that they could no otherwiſe be ſecured, in the caſe we are now conſidering: becauſe the Sins of the Penitent are ſuppoſed to be forgiven, and conſequently there could be no Puniſhment inflicted. We ſee then, all that Mr. *Chubb* has here advanced, when applied as an Objection to Chriſtianity, is nothing at all to the purpoſe. For there is no body ſuppoſed to be puniſhed contrary to Rectitude, in the Chriſtian Revelation; and no body ſuppoſed to be forgiven, contrary to Rectitude. It was fit and right that the impenitent Sinner ſhould be puniſhed; and it is fit and right, that the Penitent ſhould be forgiven, and forgiven in ſuch a manner as ſhould moſt effectually ſerve the cauſe of Righteouſneſs.

And, if we conſider farther, that Forgiveneſs of Sin in the Chriſtian Revelation, includes not only freedom from Puniſhment; but a claim to eternal Life, as the free gift of God to all whoſe

whoſe Sins are forgiven; and which, conſequently, from the very nature of a free gift, may be given to whom he pleaſes, and in what manner he pleaſes, or not given at all. The Doctrine of Forgiveneſs by a Mediator, and eternal Life by, or through him, or for his ſake, will remain unimpeach'd by any thing that Mr. *Chubb* has here advanced. And the Deiſtical Scheme will fall as far ſhort of the Chriſtian, as a mere freedom from Puniſhment falls ſhort of an eternal Happineſs.

Thus we ſee; how the *Mediatorial* ſcheme of Salvation, as far as it has hitherto been conſidered, may be explained; agreeably to the divine Attributes, the nature of Man, and the ancient Scriptures given to our Fathers; and the fundamental Doctrine of Chriſtianity freed from thoſe Difficulties, with which it has been loaded both by its Friends and Enemies: *viz.* that Almighty God has an *abſolute Right* either to forgive Sins, as an all-powerful Benefactor for his own *ſake* and for his Mercy's *ſake*; or for *the ſake of a Mediator*, and at his Interceſſion; as he bleſſed *Iſrael*, for the ſake of *Abraham* and *David*; and forgave the Sins of *Abimelech* and the friends of *Job*, upon the interceſſion and for the ſake of *Abraham* and *Job*; in order to manifeſt, how much the fervent prayer of a righteous Man prevails with *Him*; as the patron of Righteouſneſs and Judge of all the World. And we have

no

no reaſon to imagine; that God would have given Forgiveneſs and eternal Life to penitent Sinners, in any *other way:* becauſe we cannot ſee how theſe Bleſſings could have been given in ſo ſafe and wiſe a manner; or how the tremendous Character of God, as our *moral Governor* and *Judge*, could be ſo effectually preſerved by the puniſhment of the penitent Sinners; as by rewarding the Merits of *Chriſt* with theſe godlike powers, which were neceſſary to conſtitute him a Prince and a Saviour.

Upon theſe Principles, I ſhall prove in my next letter, that *Chriſtianity* is built: and ſhew the whole ſcheme of Salvation by *Chriſt* to be worthy of all Acceptation, and to be one plain regular and conſiſtent Syſtem of divine Œconomy; from the Beginning of the world to the End of it.

End of the FIFTH LETTER.

LETTER THE SIXTH.

It is *neceſſary* to know, *what* God hath revealed concerning the way of Pardon by Chriſt: It is *impoſſible* to know *more*, than he hath revealed. If men would forbear to explicate farther, there would be more Chriſtianity, and leſs Controverſy.

Whichcote's Aphoriſms; 1054.

IN my laſt Letter, I undertook to prove; that Forgiveneſs of Sin is by no means contrary to the nature of God's government, whenever the Sinner is a *proper* object of Mercy, and Forgiveneſs is of more advantage to the cauſe of Righteouſneſs, than Severity and Puniſhment. In ſuch caſes, there can be no Objection to the forgiveneſs of the Sinner, either by the immediate act of God; or by the mediation and for the ſake of another Perſon, whom God

is pleaſed to exalt to great Glory, and reward with the Power of forgiving: And ſo the Sinner may be forgiven, by the grace of God, for his *own* name's ſake, as the *original* Cauſe; and by the power of a Mediator, as the Means or *efficient* Cauſe by which he accompliſhes his Will: in the ſame manner, in which it is declared in the *old* Teſtament, that God ſhewed mercy to the *Jewiſh* nation; both for his own ſake and his Servant *David*'s Sake.

I farther obſerved; that the Condemnation to Death did not include in it an *Eternal* Death; or any repugnancy to a Reſurrection to Life; if it ſhould pleaſe God to vouchſafe to mankind ſo great an Act of Benevolence and Mercy. And from hence I argued; that our firſt parents, though condemned to die, yet were by no means in a deſperate Condition, while under the Government of a merciful and all-powerful God: For the Love of God did not deſert them, upon their expulſion from Paradiſe.

Theſe things, and ſeveral others neceſſary to be previouſly conſidered, being already explained in my laſt Letter; I ſhall now procede to ſhew the *Chriſtian* Scheme to be a regular, conſiſtent, and rational plan of divine œconomy, from the beginning to the end of the World; and to that purpoſe ſhall undertake to prove—

Firſt. That the original Deſign of God from the beginning was, to bring all good men to Salvation;

Salvation; that is, to eternal Life and Happineſs; by his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*: and the firſt Cauſe and Mover in this gracious deſign was the free Grace and Love of God.

Secondly. That the Method, in which this Salvation hath been carried-on through all diſpenſations from the beginning, hath been conducted by the Miniſtration of *Jeſus Chriſt* under different names and characters; either immediately in Perſon, or by his Angel or Angels.

Thirdly. That the efficient Cauſe or Means, by which the Salvation of Man will be completed, will be the Exerciſe of thoſe godlike Powers, of raiſing the Dead, forgiving Sin, and giving eternal Life; which were conferred on *Jeſus Chriſt* by the Father, in reward of his humiliation, ſufferings, and death.

Firſt. I am to ſhew; that it was the original Deſign of God from the beginning to bring all good men to eternal Life and Happineſs, by his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*; and that the *firſt* Cauſe and Mover in this gracious deſign was the free Grace and Love of God.

It is very plain, from what we are told by *Chriſt* himſelf, when he is giving an account of the future Judgement of mankind; that a Kingdom was prepared by God for the Righteous, before the foundation of the World(*a*). And

(*a*) *Mat.* xxv. 34.

into this Kingdom the *Meſſiah* tells us, that all the Righteous ſhall be admitted; without any conſideration what Nation they might belong to, or under what Diſpenſation they might live; but merely whether they were Righteous or Wicked(*b*). And for this Reaſon *Chriſt* is called the Saviour of the World (*c*); and is ſaid to have taſted Death for every man (*d*); and to be the Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours (that is, the *Chriſtians*) *only*, but for the Sins of the *whole* World (*e*): St. *John* ſays, he was the Light that lighteth *every* Man that cometh into the World (*f*): and St. *Paul* ſays, He is the Saviour of *all*; eſpecially of thoſe that believe(*g*): So that no man is excluded from this Salvation; who is able to ſtand the Judgment of the great day. And this being the original deſign of God prior to our Creation, and relative to the whole World; it could ariſe from no other cauſe than Benevolence, or free Grace, or Love. No other Reaſon can be given, why God hath created any Being at all; much leſs why he promiſed eternal Life to the *firſt* Man, upon his Obedience; which was done prior to his Fall, and conſequently prior to any Redemption or Interceſſion upon that account. It was God, who cannot

(*b*) *Mat.* xxv. 37. 41. (*c*) *John* iv. 4. (*d*) *Heb.* ii. 9. See *Whitby* on II *Pet.* ii. 1. (*e*) *John* ii. 2. (*f*) *John* i. 9. (*g*) I *Tim.* iv. 10.

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lie, who promiſed it *before the world began* (*h*): which was hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifeſt to the Saints (*i*): who verily was fore-ordained *before the foundation of the World*, but was manifeſt in the latter times (*k*). It was according to the good pleaſure of his Will (*l*); according to the purpoſe of him that worketh all things after the Counſel of his own Will.

All theſe Texts prove, that Salvation by *Chriſt* was decreed, prior to any Interceſſion or Sacrifice or Satisfaction, made to God the Father; and was the *original* deſign of God, when he created the World. And accordingly we find, that *Chriſt* came not *of himſelf*; but God *ſent* him into the world, in order to complete that deſign. And we are told by St. *John*; that this was the pure effect of his *Love*. "God ſo *loved* the World, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh; but have everlaſting life (*m*):" And again, "herein is Love, not that we loved God; but that He loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins (*n*)." "In this was manifeſt the Love of God towards us; becauſe he ſent his only begotten Son, that we might live

(*h*) *Tit.* i. 2. *Rom.* xvi. 25. *Eph.* i. 4, 9. iii. 11. I *Pet.* i. 20. *Rev.* xiii. 8. xvii. 8. (*i*) II *Tim.* i. 9. *Col.* i. 26. (*k*) I *Pet.* i. 20. (*l*) *Eph.* i. 5. (*m*) I *John* iii. 16. (*n*) I *John* iv. 10.

through

through him (*o*):" and St. *Paul* ſays, "God commended his Love to us; in that, while we were yet Sinners, *Chriſt* died for us (*p*)."

This *Love* of God is frequently in the new Teſtament called the *Grace* or *Favour* of God; [χάρις:] "for the proper Signification of *Grace* is Favour; Favour in ſuch a ſenſe, as denotes Mercy and Forgiveneſs, in a Superior; either remitting ſomething of his Right, or conferring ſomething beneficial upon others; *freely*, and without any obligation of debt (*q*):" accordingly we are told by St. *Paul*, that we are juſtified *freely*, by God's Grace; [δωρεὰν τῇ ἀυτοῦ χάριτι·] that is, *gratis*, of mere grace and favour; without any payment, or recompenſe, or equivalent (*r*): for this is the ſenſe of the word, wherever it is

(*o*) I *John* iv. 8, 9. (*p*) *Rom.* v. 8. (*q*) Dr. *Sam. Clarke*'s Sermons, 8vo. vol. ii. p. 265. fol. vol. i. ſer. xxix. p. 180.

(*r*) The Word δωρεὰν is only uſed in the following places in the new Teſtament. *Mat.* x. 8, they hated me *without a cauſe*. *Rom.* iii. 24, being juſtified *freely* by his grace through the Redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus. II *Cor.* xi. 7, I preach to you the Goſpel *freely*; which the apoſtle explains by ſaying, he was chargeable to no man; in ver. the 9th. and oppoſes it to his taking wages, in ver. 8. *Gal.* xi. 21, If Righteouſneſs came by the Law, then Chriſt is dead *in vain*. *Theſſ.* iii. 8, Neither have we eaten of any man's labour *for nought*. *Rev.* xxi. 6, I will give him of the water of Life, *freely*. xxii. 17, Let him take of the Water of Life, *freely*. See *Sykes*'s Scrip. Doct. p. 347.

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uſed in the new Teſtament(*s*). And he calls our Salvation [χάρις] Grace or Favour (*t*); and a free Gift (*u*); and the gift of Grace; and the abounding of Grace(*x*).

But Dr. *Clarke* ſays; It was no leſs truely and properly a *free* Gift of God, to appoint and to accept that Satisfaction; (*viz.* the Sufferings of *Chriſt*:) than it would have been, to have granted Remiſſion, if he had ſo pleaſed, without any Satisfaction at all(*y*).

But can any one be ſaid to be juſtified or forgiven *freely*; when a recompenſe and compenſation is paid for the Juſtification? The tranſferring the Puniſhment from one perſon to an other, may be a free Act; but our *Juſtification* cannot be *free*, unleſs the Sin is actually *forgiven*. For how can that be a free Gift, which is paid for? And what could be deſired, by the ſevereſt Creditor; more than a payment of the Debt, by an exact and adequate Satisfaction? And can any Man believe; that the Grace of God, which St. *Paul* ſo highly magnifies, means no more than a Readineſs to receive a full and adequate Payment and Satisfaction from a different perſon than the Sinner? Here is no appearance of any free Gift; or any ſign of Mercy at all.

(*s*) *Rom.* v. 21. (*t*) χάρισμα, *Rom.* v. 15. (*u*) ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι· ver. 15. (*x*) ἡ περίσσεια τῆς χάριτος· ver. 17. (*y*) Vol. II. p. 130. fol. Serm. cxxxvi.

Dr.

Dr. *Clarke* is ſtrangely embarraſſed on this queſtion. He allows; that "the Satisfaction made by *Chriſt* was not by way of *exact equivalent*, which God was *bound* to accept; as in the caſe of one man's paying a debt for another. For in that caſe, he ſays, "no acknowledgement was due to him to whom the debt is paid; but to him only who pays it." Neither could it with Truth be affirmed; that God forgives men's ſins *freely*, and out of *mere Grace* and Mercy; if Satisfaction were made for them in that Senſe(z)." But the queſtion is not, whether he was *bound* to *receive* the Satisfaction, or not; But whether it was *actually made*, or not. If it was an equivalent for the Debt due; and was actually *paid*; it follows as above, that no Acknowledgement was due to the perſon to whom it was paid: there could be no Grace or Favour in the Forgiveneſs; becauſe there was no Forgiveneſs. And, if it was *not* an Equivalent to the Debt due; then an adequate Satisfaction was not required: and, if the Sin may be forgiven without an *adequate* Satisfaction, it may be forgiven without *any* Satisfaction at all. And it will not be neceſſary, that the honour of God's Laws ſhould be vindicated; either by the Puniſhment of the Sinner, or by that of any innocent Perſon in his ſtead: but he may forgive the Sinner *freely*

(z) Vol. I. 305. oct. l. 81. fol. Serm. xiii.

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in the ſenſe in which St. *Paul* uſes the Word; without any Payment, Satisfaction, or Recompenſe.

In ſhort, if "the plain meaning of *Chriſt*'s making Satisfaction for us, is, as Dr. *Clarke* ſays, that God was pleaſed freely to appoint, and freely to accept, and of his mere *Grace* and *Mercy* to be ſatisfied with what *Chriſt* did and ſuffered, in Vindication of the divine Juſtice and the honour of God's Laws and Government, and for the manifeſting his irreconcilable hatred to Sin (*a*);" then I argue, as follows; If there was any Relaxation of Puniſhment in this Scheme, any Grace or Favour ſhewn, any thing ſhort of an adequate Satisfaction—So far there was a Remiſſion of Sin, [δωρεὰν·] and, if any *part* of the Sin might be forgiven, without a Satisfaction; ſo might the *Whole:* And our Juſtification and Salvation may ariſe *entirely* from the Benevolence and Grace and Love of God to Man; and be the Gift of God, and the free Gift, in the *proper* Senſe of the Words; as it is repreſented through the whole Scripture; and in truth, it was the ſenſe of this infinite Goodneſs, that reconciled the World to God.

And here it muſt be obſerved; that the doctrine of our Salvation by the free Grace of God, doth not depend upon a few obſcure Texts; as

(*a*) *Clarke*'s ſerm. vol. I. p. 305. oct. l. 81. fol. Serm. xiii.

the notion of vicarious Puniſhment does: but the whole Scheme of Redemption by *Chriſt* is declared to be founded upon it; *viz.* that God by *Chriſt* hath reconciled the World to himſelf: not that *Chriſt*, by ſuffering the Puniſhment due to Man, hath reconciled God to the World; for the New Teſtament knows no ſuch language; but that God reconciled the World to himſelf, (by) not imputing their treſpaſſes to them(*b*). And therefore the Apoſtle ſays, God hath committed to us the miniſtry of Reconciliation. But obſerve the nature and proceſs of this Reconciliation. "Now, ſays the Apoſtle, we are Ambaſſadors for *Chriſt*; as though God did beſeech you, by *us*: *we* pray you, in *Chriſt*'s ſtead, be ye reconciled to God." The only Objection to our Reconciliation to God is our Sins. By our Sins we throw ourſelves at a diſtance from him; and by Repentance and Amendment we approach him, and reconcile ourſelves to

(*b*) II *Cor.* v. 18, 19. God is never ſaid to be reconciled to the World; becauſe he was never at enmity with the World, but always willing to be their benefactor, if they would return to their duty. It was the World, that was at enmity with God; and was to be reconciled by coming to the Knowledge of his Goodneſs to them. The ſame turn of Phraſe was uſed by *Atticus* at his Mother's Funeral; when he boaſted, *ſe nunquam cum matre in gratiam rediiſſe*; that he was never *reconciled* to his Mother; it was, becauſe he was never at variance with her. *Nepos, Vit. Att.*

him

him (*c*): and the Apoſtles, by preaching Peace, that is, Forgiveneſs, preached the doctrine of Reconciliation; and *Chriſt*, by forgiving our Sins, reconciled us to God; and God, by forgiving us by or through *Chriſt*, reconciled us to Himſelf: And We, by receiving the Lord for our God, according to the Revelation we received by *Chriſt*, reconcile ourſelves to God by Him. And we muſt never forget; that the Salvation, which *Chriſt* brought, was the Salvation of God(*d*). It was God, who appointed it, and ſent it; and all that *Chriſt* did in the

(*c*) *Simplicius* obſerves, that Repentance and Prayer ought to draw us nearer to God; and not God nearer to us: as in a Ship, by faſtening a Cable to a firm Rock, we intend not to draw the Rock to the Ship, but the Ship to the Rock. And, as God, is unchangeable, this is the only ſenſe in which we can be ſaid to approach him; or to depart from him: we approach him by Righteouſneſs, and depart from him by Sin; but God is always the ſame. Thus *Iſ.* lix. 2. Your Iniquities have *ſeparated* between you and your God: and your Sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. And conſequently, we approach him by his ſetting our Sins as far from us, as the Eaſt is from the Weſt. *Pſ.* ciii. 12. *Salluſt* the Philoſopher ſpeaks in the ſame manner, ch. xiv. Sed Dii quidem boni ſunt ſemper, ſemper tantum benefici, noxii nunquam; ſemperque in omnibus eodem modo ſe habent. Nos vero, dum ſumus boni, propter ſimilitudinem Diis conjungimur; dum mali, propter diſſimilitudinem ab iis ſeparamur: et dum ex virtute vivimus, Diis adhæremus; dum vitiis inquinamur, nobes illos hoſtes comparamus.

(*d*) *Luke* iii. 6.

Redemption of Man, was in obedience to God who ſent him; as he himſelf has declared in a hundred places. And he ſent him to give Remiſſion of Sins to all that would *reconcile themſelves* to God, by repentance and amendment of Life. And God took this method of reconciling the World to himſelf; becauſe he *loved* the World. And this is the Reaſon; that, when *Chriſt* was born the Angels proclaimed, Glory to God in the Higheſt [or in Heaven], on Earth Peace or Forgiveneſs; or, what is the ſame thing, the manifeſtation of God's will to men(*e*). All this is plain and intelligible: but to aſſert, as ſome do; that the Death of Chriſt was a *Puniſhment*, which *he* underwent for *our* Sins; is a declaration, that our Sins are not forgiven at all; but only transferred, and the penalty paid by another Perſon: and a direct contradiction to every text in the new Teſtament, which ſpeaks of the Goodneſs and Mercy of God in our Forgiveneſs. And therefore I conclude; that the *Chriſtian* Religion is not founded upon Wrath of God againſt the Sins of Men, requiring a *vicarious* Puniſhment; but upon the *Benevolence* and *Love* and *Grace* of God to the World, offering by his Son a *free* Pardon; without any Puniſhment or Recompenſe at all.

Dr. *Samuel Clarke* ſays, very piouſly and juſtly; "It may ſeem at firſt ſight a pious extolling the

(*e*) See *Joſ. Mede*'s ſermon on Chriſtmas-day.

"Love

" Love of our Saviour, and the greatneſs of the " Work he undertook—to deſcribe the ſupreme " Father and Creature of all things, as having " no thoughts of Pity and Compaſſion towards " his periſhing Creatures; till moved thereto, " as it were *againſt* his original intention, by " the interpoſition of *Chriſt*. But they who " thus argue; ought, on the other hand, to be " aware, that it is no leſs injurious to Religion, " to diminiſh the original Goodneſs and Com- " paſſion of the Father of Mercies, &c. The " coming of *Chriſt* was not the firſt cauſe of " the Goodneſs and Love of God towards us; " but the eſſential and eternal Goodneſs of God " was the Cauſe and reaſon of the coming of " *Chriſt*.—Moſt unjuſtly therefore, and with " great injury to Religion, is God ſometimes " repreſented as an implacable and cruel Judge; " delighting in the deſtruction of Sinners, till " they were taken as it were out of his hands " by the interpoſition of *Chriſt*. This, I ſay, " is a very injurious Repreſentation of the great " God and Father of Mercies(*f*). Not only " the Love of *Chriſt*, which is the *mediating* " Cauſe; but the antecedent Love and eſſential " Goodneſs of the Father Almighty, which is " the *primary* and *original* Cauſe of their Salva-

(*f*) *Clarke*'s ſermons. vol. II. p. 217, 218, octavo. vol. I. ſerm. xxvii. p. 167, &c. fol.

tion

" tion is always in Scripture repreſented and laid " before them, as a motive of Gratitude; and " a principal Argument to excite in them ſuit- " able Returns of Love and Obedience to " him(*g*)." And again, after ſeveral quotations from Scripture, he ſays; " Theſe and number- " leſs other, the like paſſages in Scripture, do " ſufficiently declare;—that the Salvation of " Men by the coming of *Chriſt* is and ought to " be aſcribed *primarily* to the antecedent Love " and original eſſential Goodneſs of the Father " Almighty(*h*)."

Mr. *James Foſter*, in his very valuable Anſwer to Mr. *Tindal*, ſays: " The New Teſtament no " where repreſents God, as a rigorous and inexora- " ble Being; who inſiſted upon full Satisfaction(*i*) " for the Sins of Men, before he would be in- " duced to offer terms of Reconciliation. It " ſays indeed not one word of *Satisfaction*, much " leſs of a *ſtrict* and *adequate* Satisfaction; not " a Syllable of the *infinite Evil* of a Sin; of *in-*

(*g*) *Ibid.* p. 222. l. 168. fol.

(*h*) *Clarke*'s ſermons, vol. ii. p. 227.

(*i*) *Satisfaction* is a word never once uſed in Scripture. It was without doubt well pleaſing to God, and in that ſenſe a *Satisfaction* to him; that *Chriſt* loved us, and gave himſelf for us, as an offering and ſacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour, *Eph.* ii. 4. and God manifeſted his good pleaſure, in rewarding him for it. But *Puniſhment* is ſo far from a *Satisfaction* to him; that he calls it his *ſtrange* work. *Iſ.* xxviii. 21. And the Puniſhment of an innocent Perſon muſt be an Abomination in his Sight: Nothing can be a *Satisfaction* to God, but Righteouſneſs.

finite

" *finite Juſtice*; the *Hypoſtatical Union*, or the " Deity's being ſo united to the Man *Chriſt Je-* " *ſus*, as that the *two* infinitely diſtinct *Natures* " conſtitute *one Perſon*; and by virtue of this " Union giving an *infinite* value to the Sufferings " of the human Nature, and enabling it to pay " a ſtrict *Equivalent* to God's offended *vindictive* " *juſtice*. All this, I ſay, is the invention of " modern ages; (who by ſubtile diſtinctions and " metaphyſical obſcurities have deformed true " *Chriſtianity* to ſuch a degree, that ſcarce any " of its original features appear:) and bears not " the leaſt ſimilitude with the Language of the " New Teſtament; in which the divine Being " is always deſcribed, as *ſlow* to *anger*, merciful " and condeſcending to the frailties of Mankind: " and forgiveneſs of Sin repreſented, not as a " thing for which a price of equal Value was " paid; and which might conſequently be de- " manded, in ſtrict Juſtice; but as a *voluntary* " act of pure *Favour*, and the effect of free and " undeſerved Goodneſs(*k*)."

Secondly. I ſhall now procede to ſhew the Method, by which Almighty God has carried-on the Salvation of Man; through all the ſeveral Diſpenſations, from the beginning of the World; either immediately by *Jeſus Chriſt* under differ-

(*k*) *Foſter* againſt *Tindal*. p. 330.

ent

ent names and characters; or mediately by his Angel or Angels.

As to the Fact itſelf, we are told; that it was by *him* that God made the Worlds; [τὸν ἀιῶνας ἐποίησεν·] conſtituted or appointed the Ages or Diſpenſations; that is to ſay, by *him* God formerly diſpoſed and ordered thoſe eminent and remarkable Periods of time, the antediluvian, patriarchal and *Moſaic* ages; and now the preſent. This was the πρόθεσις αἰώνων, eternal purpoſe or diſpoſition of ages(*l*), of which the Apoſtle ſays, through Faith we ſee, the ages were framed (ἀἰῶνας κατηρτίσθαι) by the Word of God(*m*). And, as the former ages were under him; ſo was the age to come, called οἰκουμένη μέλλουσα or αἰὼν μέλλων(*n*), to be under him; by which the *Jews* underſtood the age of the *Meſſiah*(*o*); and accordingly he is called in the *Alexandrine* MS. of the LXX, the Father of the Age to come; as hath been obſerved: at the end of which he ſhall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, from whom he received it; that God may be all in all(*p*).

In conſidering how theſe Ages or Periods of time have been conducted by Jeſus Chriſt; I ſhall, firſt, give an account from the ſacred Hiſtory, in what manner He was engaged in promoting the Salvation of Man from the Creation

(*l*) *Eph.* iii. 2. (*m*) See *Sykes* on *Heb.* i. 2. and xi. 3.
(*n*) *Heb.* ii. 5. (*o*) *Iſ.* ix. 6. LXX. (*p*) I *Cor.* xv. 27.

till

till the end of the *Jewiſh* Œconomy: and ſecondly, in what manner he afterwards carried on the ſame Scheme and Deſign, in the character of *Meſſiah*, the Son of Man.

1ſt. I am to give an account, from the ſacred Hiſtory; in what manner Chriſt was engaged, in promoting the Salvation of Man; from the Creation till the End of the *Jewiſh* Œconomy.

We are told by *Moſes*; that, in the beginning, *Elohim*, (by which word he ſometimes means the Supreme *Jehovah*, and ſometimes the Angel of *Jehovah*;) created the Heavens and the Earth. And the Chriſtian Faith is this; that God created all things by *Jeſus Chriſt*(*q*), and that without the Word of God was not any thing made that was made(*r*). *David* ſays, By the Word of *Jehovah* were the Heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth(*s*); which ſeems to be the ſame Doctrine. For, if it be objected; that *David* only mean'd, that the Heavens were made at his Command; which appears to be the ſenſe of the words, in *Gen.* i. 6, 9. where God ſays, Let there be Light; Let there be a Firmament; Let the Waters be gathered together, &c. the queſtion will be, as *Irenæus* obſerves; "to *whom* did God give the Commandment?" and the anſwer muſt certainly be, to the Perſon who immediately obeyed his

(*q*) *Eph.* ii. 9. (*r*) *John* i. 3. (*s*) *Pſ.* xxxiii. 6.

Will: and who could that be, but the *Logos* or Word of God; to whom both Jews and Chriſtians have aſcribed it? And thus *Moſes*, *David*, and the Apoſtles of Chriſt agree in the ſame Account.

As God *created* our firſt Parents by *Jeſus Chriſt*(*t*), ſo alſo did he *judge* them by Him. This Subſtitute or *Shechinah* of God made *Adam*; ſays A. Bp. *Teniſon* (*u*); and he that gave him his *Being*, gave him moſt probably the *Law* of it. It was the Voice of *Jehovah* walking in the garden in the cool of the day, that converſed with them and condemned them; and this Voice could be no other than the viſible *Jehovah*, or *Word* of God (*x*); according to the unanimous opinion of all the primitive Writers, that the *Elohim*, who is ſometimes called the Angel of *Jehovah*, and ſometimes *Jehovah*, was *Chriſt*(*y*). And in pronouncing the Sentence upon the Tempter, he gave them the firſt hopes and comfortable aſſurance of his Mercy to them; by

(*t*) *Eph.* iii. 9. *Col.* i. 16. See p. 12. (*u*) *Teniſon* of Idolatry, p. 321.

(*x*) They heard the Voice of the Word of God, ſays *Onkelos*; and A. Bp. *Teniſon* quotes *Hilary*, *Tertullian*, and *Theophilus Antioch*, to the ſame Purpoſe. Perhaps God then appeared in the form of a Man, as *Gen.* xviii. ſays *Piſcator* and *Oleaſter*. See *Poli* Synopſ. *Gen.* iii. 8. and the Words of *Theophilus*, Letter iii. p. 363.

(*y*) Reply to *Waterland*'s Def. p. 177 and preced.

threat-

threatening that the Seed or Offspring of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's head; by which *Adam* and *Eve* were delivered from the fear of immediate Death; and aſſured, that the World would be continued in their Poſterity; and that one of their Deſcendents would get an Advantage over the perſon that had deceived them.

This Propheſy of the *Meſſiah*, to be ſure, is very obſcure; and indirectly intimated; nor indeed is it ſpoken, as a *promiſe* to *Man*, but as a *threat* to the *Serpent*; or rather, as our Fathers underſtood it, to *Samael*, the Angel of Death; the unclean Spirit, with whom our Doctors ſuppoſe the Serpent to have been united(z): and, whether our firſt Parents underſtood any thing more explicitely by it, we are not informed. The preſent time, when they were juſt about to receive the ſentence of their own Condemnation; could not be a proper one to enlarge upon a Subject, which conſiſted merely of God's Grace and future Favours. The tranſition from their Sorrow and Shame to Joy and Hope, might have been too ſudden; and have prevented their proper Effects. It was ſufficient for their preſent Comfort, that they were not to die immediately.

(z) See *Ainſworth* ad loc.

The Hiſtory that follows after the birth of *Enos* the Son of *Seth*, about the Year 230, informs us; that the wickedneſs of Man became great in the Earth, and every imagination of his heart was only evil continually. And *Maimonides* ſays; the Sons of *Adam* introduced the Worſhip of the Stars, and Spheres, and Images(*a*). And by comparing *Gen.* iv. 26. with *Gen.* vi. 2. it appears; that the Sons of *Seth*, who had ſeparated from the wicked, and called themſelves by the name of *Jehovah* (*b*); that is, the Servants of *Jehovah*, did afterwards mix with them again; and made intermarriages with the corrupted families. So that when *Jehovah* ſaw the earth, it was corrupt; for all Fleſh had corrupted its way(*c*) upon the earth. And this wickedneſs became ſo great, in the ſixteenth Century, in the days of *Noah*; that it repented *Jehovah*, that he had made Man; and it grieved him to the heart. So that, after having given warning by his preachers of Righ-

(*a*) See the quotation from *Selden*, Letter iii. p. 402.

(*b*) This is the meaning of *Exod.* v. 3. נקרא עלינו and ſo it ſhould be read in *Ex.* iii. 18. and not נקרח, the God of the *Hebrews* is called upon us. So it is rendered in both theſe places in the LXX, and in *Onkelos*, and in *Jerom*'s *Latin* tranſlation; and ſo We are called his People, *Ex.* vi. 3. *Dan.* ix. 9. *Iſ.* lxiii. 9. lxv. 1. See Bp. *Lloyd* on *Daniel*'s Weeks.

(*c*) This word ſignifies Worſhip, *Amos* viii. 14. *Pſ.* lxvii. 2. or any Religion, Doctrine, Manners, Action, &c. Eſſay on Spirit, note, p. 62.—*Ainſworth* ad loc.

teouſneſs

teouſneſs(*d*) for 120 Years, till eight perſons only were left uncorrupted, he deſtroyed that obſtinate and impenitent generation; juſt time enough to ſave one Family uncorrupted, to inſtruct their Children in virtuous Principles, and the Worſhip of the one God: by this well-timed Severity, the Race of *Adam* was preſerved a ſecond time from Deſtruction; as, by an act of Forbearance, in delaying the penalty of Death to our firſt Parents, it was preſerved before.—And from the *Moſaic* account of this *Jehovah*, that the Sins of Mankind grieved him to the heart, agreeable to what is ſaid of him in other parts of Scripture (*e*); and from his making a Covenant with *Noah*, we have reaſon to conclude; that it was not the Supreme *Jehovah* in Perſon, but the Angel of the Covenant.

After this all Men lived together in *Chaldæa*; till the days of *Peleg*, the fifth from *Noah*; when they divided the Earth between them. For *Jehovah* [that is, *Chriſt*, the *Jehovah* Angel] came down to ſee the City and Tower, which the children of Men builded (*f*); and, in order to

(*d*) St. *Peter* ſays, I *Pet.* iii. 19. that it was Chriſt preach'd in the days of *Noah*, by the ſame Spirit which raiſed him from the dead: that is, by the Holy Ghoſt.

(*e*) *Iſ.* lxiii. 9. *Jud.* x. 16. *Zech.* ii. 8. *Acts* ix. 4.

(*f*) *Gen.* xi. 5—8. *Novatian* argues from the words, let *Us* go down; that it could not be God the Father who came down; for his Eſſence is not circumſcribed: nor yet

to reſtrain them from their undertaking, he confounded their Language; and ſcattered them abroad upon the face of all the Earth: and they left-off to build the City. So they ſpread themſelves from *Babel* into the ſeveral Countries that fell to their ſhares; "carrying along with them the Laws, Cuſtoms and Religion, under which they had till thoſe days been educated and governed by *Noah* and his Sons and Grandſons: and theſe Laws were handed down for the two ſucceeding Centuries to *Abraham*, *Melchiſedek*, and *Job*; and *Job*'s friends appear to have been of the ſame Religion with himſelf(g)."

But,

yet an Angel; for it is ſaid *Deut.* xxxii. 8. that the *Moſt High* divided the Nations. It was therefore He that came down, of whom St. *Paul* ſaith; He that deſcended is he that aſcended above all Heavens. The *Arabic* reads, the *Angels* came down; that is, the *Shechinah*. *Teniſon*, 324.

Juſtin Martyr ſays; "When God ſays, God went up from *Abraham*; the Lord ſpake unto *Moſes*, the Lord went down to ſee the Tower, &c." do not imagine, that the unbegotten God himſelf deſcended or aſcended. For the unſpeakable Father and Lord of all things, neither goes nor walks any where. Wherefore neither *Abraham*, nor *Iſaac*, nor *Jacob*, nor any other Man ever ſaw *Him*, who is the Father and ineffable Lord of all things; even of *Chriſt* himſelf: But they ſaw *Him*, who by the Will of the Father is God, as being his Son; and an Angel, as miniſtering to his Will. Dial. p. 110.

(g) *Newton*'s Chronol. 187. And Bp. *Lloyd* ſays; The Hiſtory of the Creation, with this Propheſy (of the ſeed of the Woman) and afterwards the Hiſtory of *Noah*'s Flood

was

But, about this time; that is, about 400 years after the Flood; as the memory of that ſevere Viſitation gradually loſt its influence on the Religion and Morals of mankind, the worſhip of Idols began to ſpread abroad in *Chaldæa* and other countries; the effects of which muſt in time have proved fatal to all true Religion: and therefore, to prevent this growing evil, God called *Abraham*, the friend of God, out of *Ur* of the *Chaldæans*(*b*), where Idolatry prevailed; in order to reveal to him his Will, and keep up in his Family the Knowledge and Worſhip of the One God(*i*), and preſerve the Hiſtory of his Providence over Mankind from the beginning of the World, and the prophecies which related to future Events. So *Terah* took his Son *Abraham*, and *Lot* the Son of *Haran* his Son's Son, and *Sarah*, his daughter in Law, his Son *Abraham*'s wife; and they went forth with them from *Ur* of the *Chaldæans*, to go into the land

was doubtleſs conveyed from age to age by unwritten Tradition. Expoſ. of *Daniel*'s Weeks, p. 22. and from hence *Moſes* might receive it, and commit it to Writing.

(*b*) *Gen.* xi. 31.

(*i*) The Faith which was delivered to the *Jews*, as the firſt Principle of their Religion, is thus expreſſed by *Moſes*, *Deut.* vi. 4. Hear, O *Iſrael*; *Jehovah* our God, *Jehovah* is One. This is one of the four paragraphs, which our Fathers uſed to write upon their Phylacteries; and read twice a day. But this belief hath been long loſt, in almoſt all the Nations of the World; who under ſome pretence or other generally hold that *Jehovah* is more than One.

of

of *Canaan*; and they came unto *Haran*, and dwelt there: and *Terah* died in *Haran*. And, when *Abraham* was 75 years old, God called him out of *Haran* in *Canaan*; in the reign of *Melchiſedek*(*k*), who was King of *Jebus*, afterwards called *Jeruſalem*, and Prieſt of the Moſt High God; to whom *Abraham* voluntarily paid Tythes, and therefore he probably was of the ſame Religion.

At this time *Jehovah* made a Covenant with *Abraham* to be his God, and promiſed to make his Seed a mighty Nation, and to give them the land of *Canaan*, and that in his ſeed ſhould all the families of the Earth be bleſſed (*l*); thereby appropriating to the ſeed of *Abraham* thoſe bleſſings, and that victory over the unclean Spirit, which was before promiſed to the ſeed of the Woman. This Covenant *Jehovah* made with *Abraham*, firſt perſonally at *Sichem*, by the name of EL SHADDAI; that is, God Almighty (*m*); and did afterwards in the ſame name confirm it to his Son *Iſaac*(*n*), and after him to his ſon *Jacob*(*o*), and after him to a nation that ſhould come out of his loins (*p*): and he choſe *his* Family to be his portion and inheritance (*q*): and the Reaſon given, why our Father *Abraham* was choſen from the reſt of the world to prevent the

(*k*) *Gen.* xii. 4. (*l*) xii. 1. xiii. 14. xvii. 1. xxviii. 3.
(*m*) xvii. 1. (*n*) xxviii. 3. (*o*) *Ibid.* xxxv. 11.
(*p*) II *Sam.* vii. 12. (*q*) *Deut.* xxxii. 8.

ſpreading

ſpreading of Idolatry, was; becauſe God knew, that he would command his children and his houſhold after him; and they ſhould keep the way (*r*) of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment; that the *Lord* might bring upon *Abraham* that which he had ſpoken of him (*s*); *viz.* that he ſhould make him a great nation, and bleſs all the families of the earth in his ſeed (*t*); and accordingly he promiſes the *Iſraelites* to make good to them, by the name of *Jehovah*, all that he had promiſed to their Fathers, by the name of *El Shaddai* (*u*): I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye ſhall know, that I am *Jehovah* your God; that bring you from under the burthen of the *Egyptians*.

This return from *Egypt* God had promiſed to *Abraham*, and confirmed it with an Oath(*x*), and to this purpoſe overpowered the ſtubbornneſs of this generation of ignorant ſlaves, by ſuch miracles as they were not able to withſtand; and led them out by the hand of *Moſes* into the wilderneſs, going before them by day in a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. And the more neceſſary was this Migration at that time, as the people were defiled with the

(*r*) See note (*c*) p. 702. (*s*) *Gen.* xviii. 18, 19. (*t*) *Ibid.* xii. 3. ſee *Sykes* on the *Hebrews*, Appendix, Number 1. (*u*) *Exod.* vi. 7. (*x*) *Gen.* xv. 14. *Deut.* vii. 8.

Idols of *Egypt*; and would not hearken unto *Moſes*, nor forſake the Idols of *Egypt*(*y*).

When *Abraham* left his Country, to avoid the Idolatry of the *Chaldæans*; he viſited *Melchiſedek*, King of *Jeruſalem*; *Abimelech*, King of *Gerar*; and *Pharaoh*, King of *Egypt*: and all theſe were worſhippers of the true God. But, while the *Egyptians* were in ſlavery, both *Egypt* and *Canaan* were corrupted with idolatry; and there was no other country to flee to, that had not imbibed the ſame errors. And indeed, the *Iſraelites* were now too numerous to think of reſiding under any other government; being ſufficiently powerful to form a Kingdom of themſelves: and accordingly the Angel, who had delivered them from *Egypt*, took them under his Protection in a particular manner; and became their God and King. He found them in a deſert land, and in the waſte howling Wilderneſs; he led them about, he inſtructed them, he kept them as the apple of his Eye. As an Eagle ſtirreth up her neſt, fluttereth over her young, ſpreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; ſo the Lord alone did lead them, and there was no ſtrange God with them(*z*).

After this the ſame *Jehovah*, the Angel of the Covenant, made a Covenant with *Moſes* (*a*);

(*y*) *Ex.* xx. 8. (*z*) *Deut.* xxxii. 9, 10, 11, 12.
(*a*) *Ex.* xx. 22.

and

and did meet with him, and commune with him, and commanded, ſaying, Let them make me a Tabernacle, that I may dwell among them, and there I will meet with the children of *Iſrael*, and I will dwell among the children of *Iſrael*; and I will be their God; and they ſhall know that I am the Lord their God that brought them out of *Egypt*, that I may dwell among them; I am the Lord your God(*b*). So the Tabernacle, which is called the habitation where the Lord God, or ſupreme *Jehovah*, choſe to put his name (*c*); and where his name, that is, the *Jehovah* Angel, was to dwell (*d*); was at the ſame time the Temple of our God, and the Palace of our King: And from thence he gave Anſwers to the Queſtions, which the high Prieſt aſked him (*e*): and reſiding among us perſonally, and ſometimes viſibly, he gave us written Laws of civil Government and Religious Worſhip; fighting our Battles, as the Lord of Hoſts; defending us and our Religion, and bleſſing us

(*b*) *Ex.* xxv. 8. xxx. 36. *Numb.* vii. 89.

(*c*) *Deut.* xii. 5. during this period there were occaſional Revelations, and thoſe Revelations were made by the miniſtring Angels: one of which was called the Angel of God's preſence, whoſe name was in him. And by this miniſtry of Angels, God ſet up the moſaical State of Religion. Dr. *Jeffery* on II. *Tim.* iii. 15. p. 207.

(*d*) *Deut.* xii. 11. *Ex.* xxix. 45.

(*e*) See the manner of this Converſe, *Num.* vii. 89. *Allix* on the Jewiſh Church, 225.

with fruitful Seaſons and Victory over our Enemies, as long as we continued to obey his Laws, and carry-on the Hiſtory of his Revelations to ſucceeding Generations.

Thus the great buſineſs of the viſible *Jehovah*, for many ages till his coming as the *Meſſiah*, was to keep-up among the *Jews* the practice of Righteouſneſs, and the memory of God's Providence and Propheſy; till he ſhould be born into the world, and thereby become the *ſon of Man*; in which character he was to introduce a more perfect Revelation, and make a new Covenant with the houſe of *Iſrael*(*f*). Whereas, had the World been corrupted entirely with Idolatry before that time; the knowledge of the One God, and the hiſtory of his Providence and Supremacy and Superintendance over the affairs of Men, would have been entirely and *irrecoverably* loſt; and the *Meſſiah* would neither have been expected, nor owned; nor any Signs have remained, by which he could have been known. Nay, had the World been corrupted ſo far, as to call down the wrath of God upon the whole Race of Man; the promiſe itſelf, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be born of the ſeed of the Woman, the ſeed of *Abraham* and *David*, muſt have failed Completion; merely by the wickedneſs of Man-

(*f*) *Jer.* xxxi. 31.

kind:

kind: and, together with it, the bleſſings he was to beſtow upon all the families of the earth.

But, when God abſolutely determines an End, he at the ſame time determines that Means ſhall not be wanting to bring it about; ſo that no obſtacles ſhall prevent it. As Means to this End, at one time the whole World was deſtroyed except eight Perſons; and at an other time they were ſcattered abroad over the face of the Earth; that ſo univerſal a deſtruction might no more be neceſſary, to prevent the contagion of evil Principles: but the ſeveral Nations be reformed, by delivering them for puniſhment into the hands of one another. And at length it was with the ſame end in view, that when Idolatry began to ſpread through all Nations, God choſe a particular Family, among whom the Angel of his Preſence tabernacled; and favoured them by him with a particular Revelation of all neceſſary Truth, which he propagated by their means through the ſeveral Nations of the World. And thoſe who now hate and deſpiſe us, and are jealous of the peculiarity of God's favours to us; if they would but reflect, that the eternal Life of all Mankind depended upon *Meſſiah*; and the Birth of the *Meſſiah* required the continuance of the *Abrahamic* line, and afterwards of the line of *David*; would confeſs it to be moſt worthy of the divine Providence in ſo particular a manner to preſide over our Nation,

for

for the benefit and ſalvation of the *whole* World; and to ſend us Prophets daily, riſing up early and ſending them; with promiſes of the higheſt Glory under him, when he ſhould come to take upon him the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, and rule over all Nations; and the ſevereſt threats of ruin and deſtruction to thoſe, who ſhould refuſe his Yoke; and to declare the *Place* of his birth, and the *Time* when they ſhould expect him; that they might not be deficient in proper *evidence* of his Perſon, when he ſhould appear among them to gather together again all Nations under one head, as their Lord and King; which had been ſo long ſeparated from the *Iſraelites*, by the call of *Abraham*, and the Laws of *Moſes*. And, as long as our People continued to practiſe Righteouſneſs, and preſerved the divine Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets faithfully, they were bleſſed with Proſperity; and, when they failed and followed other Gods, no nation was ever more ſeverely puniſhed. Firſt, by *Shiſhac*, or *Seſoſtris*, King of *Egypt*; then, by *Joaſh* King of *Iſrael*; then, by *Nebuchadnezzer* King of *Babylon*; afterwards, the Temple was ſpoiled by *Vagores* Lieutenant to *Artaxerxes Ochus*, upon the diſſention of the High Prieſts; then, the City was ſurpriſed by *Ptolemy Lagi*; then taken and profaned by *Antiochus Epiphanes*; then, taken by *Pompey*; afterwards, deſtroyed by *Titus*; again, beſieged by the *Romans* and deſtroyed

ſtroyed by *Severus*, in the reign of *Adrian* in the year of *Chriſt* 136, upon the revolt under *Barcochab*, with 50 Caſtles, and 985 towns of *Judæa*. In the mean time the Theocracy became by degrees leſs conſpicuous, and almoſt impracticable; as the People became more and more corrupted, and unworthy of it. For when, by reaſon of their Sins, *Jehovah* turned their enemy and fought againſt them(*g*), they began to look upon the Gods of their Enemies not only as more powerful in themſelves, but more propitious to their Worſhippers, than the *Jehovah* who dwelt between the *Cherubim*. Thus *Ahaz* ſacrificed unto the Gods of *Damaſcus*, who ſmote him; and he ſaid, becauſe the Gods of the Kings of *Aſſyria* help Them, therefore will I ſacrifice to Them; that they may help Me (*h*); and upon this account they gradually neglected to inquire of the God of *Iſrael* and his Prophets: So that it was next to impoſſible to carry-on the Theocracy any longer. And accordingly we find, a little before the deſtruction of the City and Temple (*i*) by *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Ezekiel* ſaw the viſion of the glory of God, or the *Shechinah*, paſs from his ſeat in the Temple to the threſhold of the houſe (*k*); and from thence over the midſt of the city(*l*), and from thence to the mountain on

(*g*) *Iſ.* lxiii. (*h*) II *Chron.* xxvii. 23. *Joſ. Mede*, 668. (*i*) *Allix* Jewiſh Church, 247, 248. (*k*) *Ezek.* ix. 3. (*l*) ver. 18, 19.

the

the East(*m*). After this departure of the divine Presence, the Prophet saw the Temple forsaken, and the City destroyed, and the People carried into captivity(*n*). After this he saw no appearance of God, till their return from Captivity; when the Temple was rebuilt, and he returned again from the same mountain(*o*), and filled the house, as in *Solomon*'s time(*p*). At length, after various turns and changes, in which we were sometimes raised to the highest pitch of grandeur and power, and sometimes depressed to the lowest distress and slavery, and again restored as a body politic to our religion and government, our City new built, and a new Temple erected; we were left, after the *Babylonish* Captivity, to be governed entirely, in the last period of time before the *Messiah*'s advent, by the written word of God: which we had opportunities of studying and understanding at that time, better than we had before; our Scriptures being read in the Synagogue every Sabbath-day, our inclination to Idolatry quite cured, and innumerable Schools of polite Erudition erected under the *Maccabees*. And now the Spirit of Prophesy left us in the prophet *Malachi*, warning us to prepare by repentance and amendment of life for *Jehovah*'s coming again to reside with us; that he might be a Blessing to us, and not a Curse. "Behold

(*m*) *Ezek.* xi. 23. (*n*) xxxiii. 21. (*o*) xliii. 2, 4, 5. (*p*) I *Kings* viii. 11.

says

ſays he, I will ſend my Meſſenger; and he ſhall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddenly come to his Temple, even the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, whom ye delight in; he ſhall come, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts." And again; "Behold I will ſend you *Elijah* the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord: and he ſhall turn the heart of the Fathers to the Children, and the heart of the Children to the Fathers; leſt I come and ſmite the Earth [that is, the land of *Judæa*] with a Curſe(*q*)."

Theſe are the *laſt* words of the *laſt* of our Prophets; and theſe being claimed by *Jeſus Chriſt* (*r*) to refer to *John* the *Baptiſt* and himſelf, connect the *old* Revelation with the *new* one; and prove the *Chriſtian* Scheme to be only a continuance and farther completion of the original Deſign of God, to bring men to eternal Life by his Son, *Jeſus Chriſt*, the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, the Lord of the Temple; who was foretold by the Prophets, (under the character of *Jehovah*; who led our Fathers out of *Egypt*,) that *He* ſhould return and dwell with them, and make a new Covenant with them, and forgive their Iniquities, and remember their Sins no more(*s*). It is the completion of this propheſy, that begins the Chriſtian diſpenſation;

(*q*) *Mal.* iii. 1. iv. 5. (*r*) *Mat.* xi. 10. *Mark* i. 2. *Luke* viii. 27. (*s*) *Jer.* xxxi. 31, 34.

the Promiſe being literally fulfilled, when *Chriſt* appeared in the character of *Meſſiah*, the Son of Man and Prince of Peace; and forgave the Sins of all that believed in him: and it will be more fully accompliſhed hereafter; when he ſhall come to *reign over all*, and all *Iſrael* ſhall be ſaved; as it is written—there ſhall come out of *Sion* the Deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from *Jacob:* for this is my Covenant unto them, when I take away their Sins(*t*) (that is, their *Puniſhment*). It is remarkable, that St. *Paul* quotes this paſſage with reſpect to a future time, when all Fleſh, that is, the whole *Jewiſh* Nation, ſhall be ſaved (*u*); and conſequently it reaches to the ſecond coming of *Chriſt*, or the end of the Diſperſion; when that which is determined ſhall be poured upon the deſolate(*x*), (our unhappy Nation;) and *Chriſt* ſhall appear to rule over all at the beginning of the (αἰὼν μέλλων) age to come, or age of the *Meſſiah*.

Thus through the whole hiſtory of our Nation, from the beginning till the coming of *Chriſt*; the Angel of the *Covenant* hath preſided over us, as the Lot of his Inheritance (*y*): and it appears by the *Chriſtian* propheſies, that he will *again* receive us into his favour upon our Converſion; and reign over us, even to the end of the world. But this return of the Theocracy

(*t*) *Rom.* xi. 25, 26, 27. (*u*) ver. 26. (*x*) *Dan.* ix. 27. (*y*) *Deut.* xxxii. 9.

will

will not be, till he hath proved his Sceptre to be a Sceptre of Righteouſneſs; by puniſhing in a very exemplary manner the iniquity of our Nation, and ſhewing that his Love and Regard to them will not prevail with him to forgive their Tranſgreſſions, when they rebel againſt him, and vex his holy Spirit(z).

2. I am now in the ſecond place to conſider; in what manner the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, when he came into the world in the Character of the Son of Man, did carry-on the ſame deſign of Man's Salvation; which he began at the Creation, and had continued to the End of the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation.

And here it muſt be obſerved; that the Chriſtian Diſpenſation differs from the *Jewiſh*, in theſe remarkable circumſtances; Firſt, in the *gathering together again under one head*(a), (the *Meſſiah*) both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; preaching Peace and Forgiveneſs to all, who would receive Him and enter into his Church and Kingdom. Secondly, in the completion of numberleſs Propheſies, which had been given in the preceding ages from the time of *Adam*; and Thirdly, in that it gained to the *Meſſiah*, as the reward of his Obedience, that Kingdom or purchaſed Poſ-

(z) *Iſ.* lxiii. 10. *Deut.* iv. 30. *Hoſ.* iii. 4.

(a) This ἀνακιφαλάιωσις relates to the re eſtabliſhment of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* into the ſame condition they were in before their ſeparation; as appears by the prepoſition ἀνά.

ſeſſion; which was prepared before the foundation of the World.

As the *Angel* of the *Covenant* had formed the *Jewiſh* Œconomy, by ſeparating *our* Nation from the reſt of Mankind, that they might not fall into *their* Errors; and governing them by ſuch Laws, as ſhould continue that ſeparation till the *Meſſiah*'s advent; who was to give new Laws to them, and to the whole world: So, in the character of *Meſſiah*, he formed the *Chriſtian* Œconomy; by gathering together *again* all nations, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under *Chriſt* the one Shepherd and King over all; whoſe dominion was to be an everlaſting dominion, never to be deſtroyed.

This Monarchy of the *Meſſiah* was the great point of view with all the Prophets, from the days of *Abraham*; and propheſied of by *Jacob*, when he declares the Sceptre ſhall not depart from *Judah*, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, till *Shiloh* come; and unto Him ſhall the *gathering* of the peoples (that is, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*) be(*b*). And this *gathering* was to be the beginning of the great Salvation, which was to be introduced by him; and is ſo called in oppoſition to the *Jewiſh* Peculiarity; becauſe it was to extend over all nations, and laſt to the End of Time. And this is the PREDESTINATION, ſpoken of in the new Teſtament, as the gracious

(*b*) See Letter IV. p. 510.

method

method of Salvation by Chriſt; when he ſhould come in the Fleſh: which was fixed and determined, according to the original deſign of God, to bring all the righteous to happineſs by him, in the Kingdom which was prepared for them before the foundation of the world. For "this was the Myſtery of *his* (God's) will; according to his good pleaſure, which he had purpoſed in himſelf; that in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, he might gather together [again] in one [or under one head] all things in Chriſt, both which are in Heaven, and which are in Earth; even in Him in whom alſo we have obtained an Inheritance, being predeſtinated (προορισθέντες) according to the purpoſe of his own Will(*c*). A Myſtery, which in other ages was not made known unto the ſons of Men; as it is now revealed unto his holy Apoſtles and Prophets by the Spirit: viz. *That the Gentiles ſhould be fellow heirs of the ſame body*, and partakers of his (God's) promiſe in *Chriſt* by the Goſpel(*d*)." Here we ſee the Apoſtle explains the Predeſtination he ſpeaks-of, to mean the gathering of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* into one body *again*; which had been ſo long ſeparated, by the call of *Abraham*, and the Law of *Moſes*; and bringing them all under the ſame Revelation.

(*c*) *Eph.* i. 10. (*d*) *Eph.* iii. 5.

This

This then being the deſign of the *Chriſtian* Revelation; that *Chriſt* might become a Light to the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews*; and his Salvation extend unto the ends of the earth; and that the *Gentiles* ſhould come to his light, and *Kings* to the brightneſs of his riſing; God ſent him into the world, to publiſh the Laws of Righteouſneſs and Truth; and to preach Repentance, and Remiſſion of Sins, to all ſuch as would receive them, and live in the practice of them. And (according to the Propheſy of *Iſaiah*, that he was formed from the Womb to be the Servant of God, to bring *Jacob* unto him, and to gather *Iſrael* (*e*);) he made the firſt offer of Salvation to his own People: being "a miniſter of the Circumciſion for the truth of God, to confirm the promiſes made unto the Fathers(*f*)." Therefore St. *Peter* ſays, Ye are the children of the Prophets; and of the Covenant, which God made with our Fathers; ſaying unto *Abraham*, In thy ſeed ſhall all the Kingdoms of the earth be bleſſed: unto you *firſt*, God having raiſed up his ſon *Jeſus*, ſent him to bleſs you; in turning every one of you from his iniquities (*g*): and *Chriſt* himſelf ſays; I am not ſent, but to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of *Iſrael* (*b*); and orders his Diſciples neither to go into the way of the *Gentiles*, nor to enter into any city of the *Samaritans*;

(*e*) *Iſ.* xlix. (*f*) *Rom.* xv. 8. (*g*) *Acts* iii. 25.
(*b*) *Mat.* xv. 24.

ritans; but to go to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of *Iſrael*(*i*). And, even after *Chriſt*'s death, the Diſciples for ſome time continued to preach to the *Jews* only: but ſeeing that they put it from them, and judged themſelves unworthy of eternal Life, they turned to the *Gentiles*(*k*). For ſo the Lord commanded them, ſaying; I have ſet thee to be a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou mayeſt be my Salvation unto the ends of the Earth(*l*). And his orders to them after his reſurrection were; Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations(*m*). —So then the *Chriſtian* Revelation was a continuation of the *Jewiſh* Revelation, and a completion of the promiſes given to our Fathers; and, if our Nation had received the *Meſſiah*, when he came to them, would have been carried-on by the Family of *Abraham*, and the nation of the *Iſraelites*. For he came to them as to his *Subjects*; being at that time their *King*, as he declared himſelf to *Pilate*; and therefore he had a right to their obedience. "And thoſe among the *Jews*, who believed on him, were the Society over which he actually ruled; and all thoſe who joined themſelves to this Society, were his *Subjects*; or his Kingdom(*n*)." But, when he

came

(*i*) *Mat.* x. 5. (*k*) *Acts* xiii. 46. (*l*) ver. 49.
(*m*) *Mat.* xxviii. 19. See *Whitby*, Vol. II. p. 727.

(*n*) *Hoadly*'s anſwer to the Dean of *Worceſter*, p. 112. ſee alſo p. 109. [II. 854. and 855. fol.] where is explained *Col.* i. 13. St. *Paul* thanks God, for having delivered Chriſtians

came to his own, and *his own received him not*, he turned to the *Gentiles*; he was found of them that ſought him not; and ſaid, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by his name(*o*). This then was the great buſineſs of the *Meſſiah*, under the *Chriſtian* Œconomy, to collect together under one Lord, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and bring them to an obedience to the laws of his Kingdom. And as this Kingdom was to be extended over the whole world; and all people, nations and languages, were to ſerve him; it was abſolutely neceſſary to put an end to thoſe laws, by which our nation had been ſo long kept ſeparate from others; and to introduce everlaſting Righteouſneſs (*p*); and govern his Kingdom, by the ſame Laws, by which the ſupreme God governs the Univerſe. And all ſuch, as received the Laws of his Kingdom, became thereby the *Subjects* of his Kingdom. And as theſe Laws could only be received by Faith in *Chriſt*, or a belief that he came from God; it was upon the profeſſion of this faith, that all their former ſins were remitted. So that the moment they reconciled themſelves to God,

Chriſtians out of that Society [the power of Darkneſs] to which they belonged before; and from the power of Death, which ruled over it; and brought them, or removed them into another Society, over which his dear Son was truely King and Governor.

(*o*) *Iſ.* lxv. 1. (*p*) *Dan.* ix. 24.

by

by receiving *Chriſt* for their King, and his Laws for the *Rule of their Conduct*; God did not withhold the free gift of Remiſſion, becauſe they had been formerly unfit, or becauſe they might ſin hereafter; but Forgiveneſs immediately follow'd their Faith, and could never after be forfeited but by Diſobedience. But, if they do not endure unto the end, by an obedience to his precepts; they again *ſeparate* themſelves from God, and become again *at enmity* with him: and ſhall at the laſt day be caſt out of his Kingdom (*q*); and be condemned with the wicked and impenitent of all other Religions: for this was the end, for which *Chriſt* gave himſelf for us; that he might redeem us *from all iniquity*, and *purify* unto himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works(*r*). Thus the whole body of the *Chriſtian* Church, whether they were *Jews* or *Gentiles*, are *ſaved*; or brought together into a ſtate of *Safety* (*s*); by the preaching of peace and forgiveneſs; as was foretold by the Prophets. And this is the only *Predeſtination* ſpoken-of in the new Teſtament; though ſome of the *Chriſ-*

(*q*) *Mat.* viii. 12. xviii. 32. (*r*) *Tit.* ii. 4.

(*s*) Thus *Noah* was *ſaved* in the Ark; and St. *Paul* received a Revelation, that no ſoul ſhould *periſh* in the Shipwreck. But this only mean'd, that they ſhould have it in their power to be ſaved; not that they ſhould be ſaved whether they would or no: and ſo enduring to the end is as neceſſary for *Chriſtians*. See *Acts* xxvii. 22, 31.

tians have deduced moſt abſurd and unwarrantable Doctrines from it, by miſunderſtanding it. The word *Predeſtination* is mentioned, in the new Teſtament, only four times; twice in the eighth Chapter to the *Romans*, and twice in the firſt to the *Epheſians:* and in all theſe Texts re-relates to the bringing the *Gentiles* into the Church of God; and has never any other meaning.

The whole Proceſs of the Salvation of obedient *Chriſtians* by *Chriſt*, is thus briefly given us by St. *Paul.* [*Rom.* viii.] Whom God did *foreknow*(*t*), (thoſe Generations whom God did intend to favour as he did the *Jews*, with a deſign to give them his Revelations, and make them his Church) he alſo did *predeſtinate* to be conformed to the image of his Son; [deſigning that he ſhould inſtruct them, and be an example to them, that they ſhould follow his ſteps.] And whom he did *predeſtinate*, [that they ſhould be enlighten'd with the *Chriſtian* Revelation, and become his Church;] them he alſo *called*; [he *called* them all together, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, into his Church; gathering them under one head, thereby putting an end to the *Jewiſh* Peculiarity:] and whom he *called*, them he alſo

(*t*) *Fore-know*] that is, *favour*. See *Amos* iii. 2. You only have I *known*, &c. and I *Cor.* xvi. 18. *Know* ſuch; that is, ſhew Civility to them. *Hoadly*'s anſwer to *Hare*'s ſerm. p. 25.

juſtified

juſtified (*u*); [upon their obeying his Call, and becoming his Subjects, and joining themſelves to him as his Diſciples, he forgave them all their former Sins:] and laſtly, whom he *juſtified*, them he alſo *glorified*. [All thoſe, whoſe Sins were forgiven upon their firſt becoming *Chriſtians*, he receives into Glory in his heavenly Kingdom.]

And here it muſt be obſerved; that the Apoſtle is not ſpeaking, in this place, either of the Heathens who never heard of *Chriſt*; or of thoſe *Jews* and Heathens who did not receive him, and obey his call; or of thoſe who did not make their calling and election ſure, by an obedience to his Laws; and enduring unto the End: but

(*u*) *Juſtified*] this word, as Mr. *Robert Barclay* obſerves, includes the whole between *calling* and *glorifyng*. He quotes *Thyſius*; the *Juſtification* ſeems to include *Sanctification*: and *Bullenger*; that in the Text, but ye are *waſhed*, juſtified, *ſanctified*; the Apoſtle means the ſame thing in theſe ſeveral words: and *Chamierus*; that Juſtification and Sanctification do infer one another; yea, the Saints are for that reaſon called ſo; becauſe they have received remiſſion of Sins. *Barclay's* Apol. p. 220.

Mr. *Ainſworth* obſerves, on *Pſ.* i. 1. that to make *juſt* or *juſtify*, is to *acquit* or abſolve in judgement; *Pſ.* lxxxii. 3. and to make or pronounce *wicked*, is to condemn. *Pſ.* xxxvii. 33. xciv. 21. *Deut.* xxv. 1. So that the objections of Mr. *Chubb* and others to St. *Paul's* Expreſſion in the Epiſt. to the *Romans*, that many are made Sinners; proceed from ignorance of the *Hebrew* Idiom. For the Senſe of δικαιόω, ſee *Gataker* de Nov. Teſt. Stylo; in Indice.

only of the method or proceſs, by which thoſe *Chriſtians* who *love God*, are led-on to Glory by him. For he gives this account, merely in order to prove and explain what he had advanced in the 28th verſe; that "all things work together for good to thoſe that *love* God; to them who are *called according to his purpoſe*; that is, to all obedient *Chriſtians:* for thoſe only can be ſaid both to *love God*, and alſo to be *called according to his purpoſe.*

Here we ſee, the Peculiarity of *Election* and *Grace* (by which *Abraham* and his poſterity were choſen, or elected by the *Angel* of the *Covenant* to preſerve the hiſtory of God's Providence, when the reſt of the world is generally imagined to be left without any Revelation;) ſtill continues in the *Chriſtian* Church; and is open to all, that have opportunity and a deſire to enter into it. The great advantage of this Revelation belongs entirely to the *Chriſtians*, and is thus expreſſed by St. *Peter*; that God, having raiſed up his Son *Jeſus*, ſent him to bleſs them; [to whom he preached,] by turning away every one of them from their Iniquities(*x*). And St. *Paul* informs us; that the Grace of *God*, which bringeth Salvation unto all Men, hath appeared [by *Jeſus Chriſt*,] teaching us, that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent World;

(*x*) *Acts* iii. 26.

looking

looking for the bleſſed hope and appearance of the Glory of the great God, and our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*; who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good Works(*y*). Thus the *Chriſtians*, who were contemporary with *Chriſt*, and heard his Doctrine; were delivered out of the power of Darkneſs, into his marvellous Light; out of heathen Ignorance and Superſtition, into the knowledge of the true God. And thus far did *Chriſt*, in the character of a Prophet, carry-on the ſcheme of Man's Salvation; by inſtructing them in Righteouſneſs, and making them fit and meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light.

But the benefits received by the *Revelation* of *Chriſt*, and the benefits received by his *Mediation*, are very different things(*z*). The *Mediation* of *Chriſt* relates to all the families of the earth: but his *Revelation* extends only to the *Chriſtians*; and, even among them, not *one* has ever obtained eternal Life; by the knowledge of it. The *Chriſtian* Revelation could no more give Life, than the *Jewiſh* Law: no man is ſaved, as an adequate Reward of his perfect Righteouſneſs, by means of either; but, as it was with the *Jew* and *Gentile*, when *Chriſt* came; ſo

(*y*) *Tit.* ii. 11. (*z*) See this farther explained in Letter VII.

it

it is with the *Chriſtian* now: Every one having broken the Law, muſt depend upon the Mercy and Power of the Lawgiver. The Reſurrection from the dead, forgiveneſs of Sins and eternal Life in the Kingdom of God and his *Chriſt*, are Bleſſings derived to us from another Cauſe, and by another Medium: which I ſhall now procede to conſider and explain; by ſhewing,

Thirdly; that the *immediate* or *efficient* Cauſe, by which the Salvation of Man will be completed, will be the exerciſe of thoſe powers which were conferred on *Chriſt* by the Father, in reward of his Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death. And this ſubject I ſhall explain under theſe four heads—

1ſt. That *Chriſt* came into the World, to do the Will of the Father.

2dly. That, in obedience to the will of the Father, he underwent Sufferings and Death.

3dly. That, in Reward of his Obedience, he was highly exalted; and received very extraordinary Powers.

4thly. That we are ſaved by the exerciſe of thoſe Powers, which He receiv'd in Reward of his meritorious Obedience.

1ſt. I am to ſhew; that *Chriſt* came into the World, to do the Will of the Father. This very plainly appears, from the Teſtimony of *Chriſt* himſelf. He tells us, that he came not *of himſelf*; but the Father ſent him: and neither the

the Words which he ſpake, nor the Works which he did, were *his*; but the Father's (*a*): for he did nothing *of himſelf* (*b*); but, as the Father gave him commandment, ſo he did (*c*); and gave his Diſciples the words which God had given him (*d*): that he came in his Father's name (*e*), and did his works in his name (*f*); and ſought not his own will, but the will of him that ſent him (*g*): and came down from Heaven, not to do his own will; but the will of him that ſent him (*h*): and it was his meat to do it, and to finiſh his work (*i*); and he *did finiſh* it in ſuch a manner, as to glorify God by it (*k*); and by obeying his commands to abide in his Love (*l*). I muſt deſire you to read the few chapters here quoted; and then to judge, fairly and impar-

(*a*) *Jo.* xiv. 10, 24. (*b*) viii. 28. (*c*) xiv. 31. (*d*) xvii. 8. (*e*) v. 43. (*f*) x. 25. (*g*) v. 30.

(*h*) *Jo.* vi. 38. If the Goſpel be examined without prejudice or ill-will, we ſhall always find; that *Chriſt* aſcribes whatever he ſaid or did to the Father, as the Author and principal Cauſe; and calls himſelf the Servant of God, referring all things to his glory In the firſt place, he expreſsly declares, that he was ſent by God: and beſides, the Miracles which he did, he does not aſcribe to Himſelf; but to the power given him by the Father. And ſo the Doctrine, &c. Therefore, when he requires Faith in himſelf, he never declares himſelf to be the ſupreme God; but the Meſſenger of the ſupreme God: and that the Faith in him does not terminate in *Him*; but in *God*, by whom he was ſent. *Limb.* Amic. Collat. p. 546, 547.

(*i*) *Jo.* iv. 34. (*k*) xvii. 4. (*l*) xv. 10.

tially;

tially; whether thoſe, who explain away all the meritorious obedience of *Chriſt*, by a pretended equality between *Chriſt*, and the God of *Chriſt*; are not as much blinded by their prejudices, as any people in the world ever were.

2dly. In obedience to the will of the Father, *Chriſt* underwent Sufferings and Death.

Iſaiah tells us; that he was formed from the Womb to be the Servant of God; to bring *Jacob* unto him (*m*): and yet, when he came into the World for that purpoſe, he was deſpiſed and rejected of Men; that it pleaſed God to bruiſe him, and put him to Grief; that he was cut-off from the land of the living, and poured-out his ſoul unto Death(*n*). And from the New Teſtament we find this Propheſy exactly fulfilled: *viz.* that he was ſent to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of *Iſrael* (*o*); and was a miniſter of the Circumciſion for the Truth of God, to confirm the promiſes made to the Fathers (*p*); and came to them that were under the Law (*q*); and to bleſs them, by turning every one away from his iniquities (*r*); and to this purpoſe he went through *Judæa* and *Galilee*, teaching in the ſynagogues, and preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom in their cities (*s*): for to that purpoſe he was ſent(*t*). And, in the faithful performance of this labori-

(*m*) *Iſ.* xlix. (*n*) liii. (*o*) *Mat.* xv. 24.
(*p*) *Rom.* xv. 8. (*q*) *Gal.* iv. 4. (*r*) *Acts* iii. 26.
(*s*) *Mat.* xi. (*t*) *Luke* iv. 43.

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ous work, he was continually ſubjected to the contradiction of Sinners; and was looked-upon as a Deceiver, and Impoſtor, and Sorcerer; and accuſed that he had a Devil, and did his Miracles by the Devil's power: and, what perhaps was ſpoken of him with as much malice, as any other blaſphemy; he was called a *Samaritan*.

After ſome years ſpent in this manner, endeavouring in vain to gather into his Kingdom our unhappy Nation; he was not only rejected by the Elders, and chief Prieſts, and Scribes; but ſeized-on, as a Blaſphemer, and a Rebel, and delivered-up to the *Gentiles:* He was mocked, reviled, derided, and in the moſt contemptuous manner buffeted, ſpit-upon, and crowned with thorns: denied by his Friends, betrayed by a Diſciple; condemned, upon the evidence of falſe Witneſſes, and by the ſentence of a Judge who believed him innocent, to die the ignominious death of a Slave and be crucified, in compliance with the clamours of that very people he was ſent to ſave; even his own Subjects, whom he had ſo carefully watched over for many ages, as the Lot of his inheritance. And indeed, the greateſt ſufferings *he* underwent, ſeem to have ariſen the evening before his death, from the ſenſe of *their* wickedneſs and obſtinacy; and the latter end which was preparing for *them*, in conſequence of it. His own condemnation he bare with Patience and Silence, and had fre-

quently ſpoken of it with great Fortitude and Reſignation; but the Agony he felt in the garden was exceſſive; and if the propheſy of *Iſaiah* (ch. xlix) relates to that part of his Hiſtory; it ſeems to have ariſen from a ſenſe of the ſmall Succeſs of his Miniſtry, in gathering our unhappy nation into his church; and the ruin and deſtruction which his death by *their* hands would unavoidably bring upon *them*. This was an adequate ſubject for that vehemence of Prayer, which made him ſweat as it were great drops of Blood; and uſe both Tears and Cries, when he offered-up his Supplications(*u*). For his mind was ſo torn with the foreſight of our miſerable deſtruction; that he ſuffered in a very aſtoniſhing manner: and an Angel was ſent from Heaven, to ſtrengthen him and enable him to ſupport it; by the aſſurance, that, although *Iſrael* was not gathered, yet the benefit of his miniſtry ſhould extend to the ends of the earth(*x*).

All

(*u*) *Heb.* v. 7.

(*x*) *Iſ.* xlix. 6. It is remarkable; that, both in the propheſy of *Iſaiah*, and in the Evangeliſts, this event is repreſented in the evening before the *Meſſiah*'s death: when his Labour was over, and he had (according to all appearance) ſpent his Strength for nought. [*Luke* xxii. 44. *Iſ.* xlix. 3, 4.] In both of them He deſponds: [*Mat.* xxvi. 38. *Luke* xxii. 43. *Iſ.* xlix. 4.] And yet, notwithſtanding this, he expreſſes his Faith and Reſignation, and Readineſs to go through with his Afflictions. [*Luke* xxii. 37, 44. *Iſ.* xlix. 4.] And in both he receives an anſwer from God, to encourage

All theſe Sufferings, and at laſt Death itſelf, were undertaken and completed; in compliance with the commands of God: and were indeed the foreſeen and natural Conſequences of his coming into the world, *as the Son of Man*; to reform the world, and fulfill the propheſies of bringing-in a new and better Covenant; by which the pleaſure of the Lord was to proſper in his hand(*y*). And therefore theſe Sufferings were to be amply rewarded.

3dly. The *Meſſiah*, upon account, and in reward of his obedience and ſufferings in performing the Will of God, was highly exalted; and received very extraordinary Powers.

The fundamental Propheſy of the *Chriſtian* Religion is that of *Daniel* (*z*); that "the Son of Man came in the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all

courage and ſupport him. [*Luke* xxii. 43. *Iſ.* xlix. 5.] and St. *Paul* tells us, *Heb.* v. 7. he was heard ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας upon account of his Reverence †; and his particular Reverence was expreſſed in thoſe words of Reſignation to the divine Will, Not my *will*, *but* thine *be done*. And he was heard; in that the Benefits of his death were extended to the end of the earth.

(*y*) *Iſ.* liii. 10. (*z*) *Dan.* vii. 13, 14.

† See this ſenſe of the word εὐλαβεια *Socr.* Eccleſ. Hiſt. l. xi. 38. *Edit. Cantab.*

people, nations, and languages ſhall ſerve him: his Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion; and his Kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed:" and, according to this propheſy, the angel *Gabriel* declares to the Virgin *Mary*; "Behold, thou ſhalt bring forth a Son; and he ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt; and the Lord ſhall give unto him the throne of his Father *David*, and he ſhall reign over the houſe of *Jacob* for ever; and of his Kingdom there ſhall be no end(*a*)." But this Kingdom was not given to the *Meſſiah*, merely as a *benevolent* and *arbitrary* gift of an all-powerful *Governor*; but in a *judicial* manner, in reward of his meritorious obedience; as the *award* of a *juſt* and *impartial Judge*. It was, becauſe the *Meſſiah* loved Righteouſneſs and hated Iniquity, that his God anointed him with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows (*b*): It was, becauſe he was ſo much better than the Angels, that he obtained by inheritance, a more excellent name than they; being conſtituted the Heir of all things (*c*): It was for the ſuffering of Death, that he was crowned with Glory and Honour; ſays the Apoſtle (*d*): as it was propheſied by *Iſaiah*; therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong; becauſe he poured-out his Soul un-

(*a*) *Luke* i. 32, 33. (*b*) *Heb.* i. 9. (*c*) i. 2, 4. (*d*) ii. 8.

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to death, and was numbered with the tranſgreſſors(*e*). It was, becauſe he was made *a little while* lower than the Angels, that all things were put in ſubjection under his feet (*f*); and *Chriſt* himſelf ſaith, As the Father hath life in himſelf; ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf; and hath given him Authority to execute Judgment alſo, becauſe he is the *Son of Man* (*g*): that is, becauſe he came into the world in that character ſpoken-of by the Prophets, and undertook to go through ſuch humiliation and affliction, as they had foretold; in obedience to God who ſent him. And the Apoſtle ſays, he made himſelf of no Reputation; (ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτόν·) he emptied himſelf of that Glory which he had with God before the world was (*b*); and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Man; (who was before in *Shechinah*, ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ, in the form of God (*i*);) and being formed in faſhion as a Man, he humbled himſelf and became obedient unto death; even the death of the Croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, that is above every name; that in the name of *Jeſus* every Knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every Tongue ſhould confeſs, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is Lord; to the Glory of God the Fa-

(*e*) *Iſ.* liii. (*f*) *Heb.* ii. 8. (*g*) *Jo.* v. 26, 27.
(*b*) *Jo.* xvii. 5. (*i*) *Phil.* ii. 6.

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ther(*k*). And upon the throne of *David* he ſhall reign, till he delivers-up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, from whom he received it; when he ſhall have put down all authority and power, that oppoſes it: for he muſt reign, till he hath put all things under his feet(*l*).

But the chief part of his Reward, in which Mankind is moſt immediately concern'd, is this; that God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to *Iſrael*, and remiſſion of Sins(*m*), to be the Lord of quick and dead(*n*), to have life in himſelf(*o*), and to quicken whom he will(*p*), and to give eternal Life(*q*), and power to become the ſons of God(*r*), and partakers with him in his Kingdom(*s*). It is manifeſt, theſe Powers were part of his Reward; becauſe they are conſidered as the motives and reaſons of his ſufferings: for to this end *Chriſt* both died and roſe and revived; that he might be Lord both of the dead and living(*t*): and God appointed us to obtain Salvation by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who died for us; that, whether we wake or ſleep, we might live together with him(*u*). And therefore He is ſaid to have *bought* Us with a Price(*x*); and We

(*k*) *ver.* 7. (*l*) I *Cor.* xv. 24, 28. (*m*) *Acts* v. 31. (*n*) x. 42. (*o*) *Jo.* v. 26. (*p*) v. 21. (*q*) *Jo.* xvii. 2. (*r*) i 12. (*s*) *Col.* i. 12. (*t*) *Ro.* xiv. 9. (*u*) I *Th.* v. 10. (*x*) I *Cor.* vi 20. vii. 23.

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are ſaid to be *purchaſed* with His blood(*y*). And the Salvation of the World appears to have been the Joy that was ſet before him; for which he endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame(*z*). For this is the conſolation given him by God, as I obſerved; when he is repreſented by the prophet *Iſaiah*, in a deſponding manner complaining, becauſe he had gotten ſo few Converts. "I have laboured *in vain*, I have ſpent my ſtrength *for nought*; but the Lord ſaid, though *Iſrael* be not gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord; and my God ſhall be my ſtrength. And he ſaid, It is a light thing that thou ſhouldſt be my Servant to raiſe-up the tribes of *Jacob*, and to reſtore the preſerved of *Iſrael:* I will alſo give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*; that thou mayſt be my Salvation unto the *ends of the earth*(*a*)." The proſpect therefore, that in him ſhould all the families of the Earth be bleſſed; which was the pleaſure of the Lord, that was to proſper in his hand (*b*); was conſidered by him as a Motive for his undergoing ſuch a ſtate of humiliation and affliction: and his Glory and Power of conferring Happineſs was the Reward of it.

4thly. I am now in the laſt place to ſhew, that We are *ſaved* by the exerciſe of thoſe Powers,

(*y*) *Acts* xx. 28. (*z*) *Heb.* xii. 3. (*a*) *Iſ.* xlix. 6. *Lu.* xi. 32. (*b*) *Iſ.* liii. 10.

which

which *Chriſt* received in reward of his meritorious Obedience.

I have already obſerved, in my *fifth* Letter; that our firſt Parents were not only *ſubjected* to Death, but *condemned* to it, by God; as a *judicial* Puniſhment for Sin: and, conſequently, no Being in the univerſe could have any right to reſtore them to Life; without his permiſſion.

The Powers therefore, which were neceſſary to conſtitute *Chriſt* a Saviour, and bring Mankind to eternal Life and Happineſs by him; were theſe—

Firſt, the Power of raiſing the Dead:

Secondly, the Power of forgiving Sin:

Thirdly, the Power of giving Eternal Life—all which he received in reward of his obedience, when he became the Son of Man.

Firſt, he had power given him to raiſe the dead. For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth them; ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will(*c*). By this means *Adam* and all his Poſterity, are reinſtated in that capacity of being judged and rewarded at the laſt day; which they would have been in, had *Adam* never ſinned; nor themſelves. This Redemption from Death extends to *all* Men; as in *Adam*, *all* die; ſo in *Chriſt*, ſhall *all* be made alive (*d*): and this requires neither Faith, nor Works, nor any con-

(*c*) *Jo.* v. 21. (*d*) I *Cor.* xv.

dition

dition whatever, towards the obtaining it; but comprehends both good and bad. This Redemption from Death is the firſt ſtep to our Salvation; and the neceſſary link in the chain, which joins the *preſent* to the *future* ſtate; and extends to the recovery of what was loſt by the ſin of *Adam*; but it extends no farther: upon which account it may be juſtly aſked; what will this Redemption avail us, at the day of Judgement? or what will be the advantage of a Redemption from Death; if, notwithſtanding the benefits of a Revelation, in *many* things we offend *all* (*e*); and our Sins muſt therefore condemn us to a *ſecond Death*?—

Secondly, It was neceſſary therefore; that *Chriſt*, in order to become a Saviour, ſhould be endowed alſo with the Power to forgive Sin. And this goes-on farther towards our Salvation, than merely a Reſurrection from the dead; and is called, by St. *Paul*, the *abounding* of the free gift of God: that is, it is not limited by any analogy to *Adam*'s offence, for it is not confined to *one* offence, but extends to *many* offences, unto Juſtification and Forgiveneſs(*f*). This χάρισμα or free Gift, was abſolutely neceſſary to our Salvation; becauſe without it we ſhould be in no ſafer a condition, as to *eternal* Life; than we were before *Chriſt* came. And therefore when *Chriſt* came in the character of a Saviour,

(*e*) I *Cor.* xv. 22. (*f*) *Ro.* v. 15, 16, 17.

to gather both *Jews* and *Gentiles* into his Kingdom as a place of ſafety; he forgave the ſins of all thoſe who became his Subjects. For God raiſed him to be a Prince and a Saviour; to give Repentance to *Iſrael*, and Remiſſion of Sins (*g*): and therefore Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins were preached in his name among all Nations, beginning at *Jeruſalem* (*h*); as was foretold by the prophets (*i*).

But the forgiveneſs of Sins to thoſe particular Perſons among whom *Chriſt* lived and preached, reached but to a very ſmall part of Mankind; and fell far ſhort of accompliſhing the promiſe which was made to *Abraham*; that in his ſeed ſhould *all the families of the earth be bleſſed:* and much more ſo, when we conſider the many Sins which the beſt *Chriſtians* were guilty of after ſuch Remiſſion. And therefore,

3dly, What compleated the character of *Chriſt*, as the Saviour of the World; and enabled him to perform this Promiſe, made to our Fathers; was the Power he receiv'd of judging all Men at the laſt day; and giving eternal Life. For the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all judgement to the Son; and given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal Life to as many as He (the Father) hath given him (*k*);

(*g*) *Acts* v. 31. (*h*) *Luke* xxiv. 47. (*i*) *Acts* x. 43. *Jer.* xxxi. 34. *Dan.* ix. 14. *Iſ.* liii. 12, &c. (*k*) *Jo.* xvii. 2.

that

that is, to all ſuch as upon their future judgement ſhall be declared to be righteous; and placed at the right hand of the Son of Man(*l*).

Now all theſe things; raiſing the Dead, forgiving Sin, and giving eternal Life, are acts of *Power*; and of that very Power, which *Chriſt* receiv'd in reward of his meritorious Obedience; to enable him to compleat our Salvation. And it is upon this account, that the Goſpel is ſaid to be the Power of God unto Salvation; and Chriſt is ſaid to be anointed with *Power*(*m*). For though he *gained* his Power, and *entered into* his Glory, by a State of *Humility* and *Sufferings*; for which he was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour: yet he *ſaves us*, as a *Conqueror* over Sin and Death(*n*); by deſtroying him, that hath the power of Death; that is, the Devil (*o*): (called the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Prince of this World, and the God of this World(*p*). And he ſaves us in his *Royal Character*, or that of a *King*; by giving us an inheritance in his Kingdom: and accordingly he is repreſented by *Daniel*, as receiving a Kingdom from the Ancient of Days(*q*); and by the Evangeliſts, as ſitting upon the Throne of *David*(*r*): and as coming in the Glory of the Father, or in *Shechinah*, as in former days; diſpenſing Eternal Life to whom he

(*l*) *Mat.* xxiv. 31, 33. (*m*) *Acts* x. 38. (*n*) I *Cor.* xv. 54, 55. (*o*) *Heb.* ii. 14. (*p*) II *Cor.* iv. 4. *Eph.* ii. 2. (*q*) *Dan.* vii. 14. (*r*) *Luke* i. 27.

will, and deſtroying his Enemies with the brightneſs of his Coming. By all which it appears; that our Salvation is to be compleated by *Power*(s).

Thus we ſee; in what manner *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Angel of the Covenant, has been employ'd from the Beginning; in bringing all good Men to Happineſs in that Kingdom, which he was about to purchaſe by his Righteouſneſs; acting all along, according to the different circumſtances of Mankind, ſometimes as an *Angel*, and ſometimes as a *Man*; ſometimes revealing the Will of God by his Prophets, ſometimes by his Angel(t), and ſometimes by Himſelf in Perſon: At one time, forming a Syſtem of Laws to preſerve the *Jewiſh* nation ſeparate from the reſt; at another time, gathering together again both *Jews* and *Gentiles* under Himſelf, as their Lord and King; and giving them Laws, more fitly adapted to his Univerſal Monarchy: diveſting

(s) This account of our Salvation by *Power*, which Chriſt gained in reward of his Obedience, anſwers two very capital Objections of the Deiſts; Since God, ſay they, was *always* willing that *all* men ſhould be ſaved by *Chriſt*; why was not his Revelation made *ſooner?* and why was it not *univerſal?* And again; If *Chriſt* was ſent into the world, to reform it; how comes it, that his Revelation has not that effect? and what good has it done, if *Chriſtians* are as bad as other Men? For the anſwer to theſe Queſtions I refer the Reader to Letter VII.

(t) *Rev.* i. 1.

himſelf

himſelf of his natural Glory in Heaven, and humbling himſelf to appear among us as the Son of Man; refuſing, for our ſakes, neither Affliction, Contumely, nor Death: thereby gaining, in reward of his Benevolence, and Obedience, and Virtues of every kind, thoſe powers; which were neceſſary to complete the character of a Saviour, and bring his faithful Subjects to eternal Life.—But here we muſt obſerve, that the Powers of *Chriſt* were the Rewards of *his* Merit; but the Bleſſings he beſtowed on Mankind were not the Rewards of *our* Merit, but free Gifts. There is no doubt; but that, in the general method of God's Providence in the government of moral agents, as the Patron of Righteouſneſs, and Judge of all the earth, the great Law muſt be; that Glory and Happineſs ſhall be the reward of *perſonal* Merit: and thus the glory which *Chriſt* received was the proper Reward of his meritorious Obedience. But this is not the caſe with Men. *They* do not receive eternal Life, as the adequate reward of *their* Merit; but as the *free Gift* of an all-powerful and benevolent Creator and Benefactor; from which none are excluded, but thoſe who are *unfit* to receive it. And farther than this the Mercy of God cannot be conceived to go, in the Salvation of Men; without mixing the good and bad together in the Kingdom of *Chriſt*: which would render it a place of unhappineſs.

From

From the whole we ſee, 1. that the Salvation of Man, and the whole Scheme of *Chriſtianity*, is founded upon the *Benevolence* and *Love* of God; by which he was moved to ſend his Son into the World, with the offer of *free* pardon and forgiveneſs to all that would receive him, and become his Subjects; and to give him up to Death for our Sakes.

2. That it is carried-on by the Benevolence and Love of *Chriſt*; who gave himſelf for us, that he might bring us to Virtue and Happineſs. It is impoſſible to conceive a greater inſtance of Benevolence and Love, than his Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death; in order to become *mighty to ſave:* or a greater Reward, than he received; which was the *Power* to *ſave.* A Reward, which could be perfectly enjoy'd by none, except a Perſon of the higheſt moral Excellence.

3. As the *Chriſtian* Religion is founded on the Love of God, and carried-on by the Love of *Chriſt*; it is completed by the Love of Man to God and to *Chriſt*, and to one another. "In this is our Love made perfect, that we may have boldneſs in the day of Judgment; becauſe as He, that is, *Chriſt* was, ſo are We in this World." In ſhort, the great end of the *Chriſtian* Revelation is to make us all *one* with *God* and *Chriſt*; that we may learn to act upon the *ſame* Principles of Benevolence and Love, and thereby purſue in a conſiſtent manner, as *They* do,

do, the Perfection and Happineſs of the Univerſe: for the Sum of all perfection in *rational* Beings conſiſts, as I have before obſerved, in *unity of will and deſign* with God; who is infinitely wiſe, and juſt, and good. From all this it appears to Me; that the *Chriſtian* Religion is the moſt glorious and intereſting Scheme that can poſſibly be conceived, for the advancement of Virtue and Happineſs; and worthy of all acceptation: and therefore I not only find myſelf obliged to receive it, and practiſe its Laws; but to recommend it to my Friends alſo: and particularly to yourſelf, whom I ſo greatly love and eſteem.

It may perhaps after all be objected; that *God* is declared in the *Chriſtian* Scriptures to be our Creator and Redeemer, and Saviour, and Juſtifier. And, if ſo, what need was there of any *other* Saviour, than God himſelf? what need was there, that *Chriſt* ſhould ſuffer upon this account; or any other Perſon? why does not God elect, and juſtify, and glorify, by his own immediate act?

I anſwer; becauſe it was not the deſign of *God* merely that good men ſhould receive eternal Happineſs; but that this gift ſhould be conferred upon them in the wiſeſt *manner*, and have the greateſt *effect* among Men and Angels; in promoting

promoting the Honour, that is, the moſt worthy Sentiments of God; and the cauſe of Righteouſneſs. For God does not govern the World by *independent*, *unconnected*, and *arbitrary* acts of Power; but by a *conſiſtent Scheme* of order and dependency of the parts: and the Redemption of Man is part of the great deſign; and tends to promote the natural Happineſs and moral Perfection of the whole: and God carries-on this end and deſign, by the operation of his Creatures, ſo; that not only every Man in the world, but every Being in the Univerſe is employed; every one has ſome end in view, and ſome buſineſs to do; and the whole Univerſe is kept in action. Whereas to ſuppoſe, that God ſhould, by his own immediate act, bring-about every event that he has decreed; is to leave no room for the actions of any other Being in the Univerſe. God *might*, no doubt, if he had pleaſed, have revealed his Will to mankind; without the intervention of the ancient Prophets: but where then had been the Office, Trial, and Reward of the Prophets? God *might* have created all Men, without the intervention of Parents; but where then had been the beneficial Connection between the Parents and Children? God does not act in ſo unconnected and ſhort-ſighted a manner; but makes one Cauſe ſerve ſeveral Purpoſes, by its various uſes and connections:

In

In *human* works, though labour'd on with pain,
A *thouſand* Movements ſcarce *one* Purpoſe gain;
In *God's one* ſingle does *its End* produce;
Yet ſerves to ſecond too ſome *other Uſe*.

Pope, Ep. i. l. 54.

Of theſe *connections*, and the *uſes* that ariſe from them, we frequently know nothing; and, when that is the caſe, our objections are mere Ignorance and Folly: but thus far we *do* know; that the Prophets had a *Trial* to go through, or a *Duty* to perform, and a *Character* to maintain; as well as the people they were ſent to: that mankind were not only to be created, but created in ſuch circumſtances, as to employ and improve the virtues both of the children and parents; and connect the world in ties of relation and benevolence. And our Redemption was not confined in its conſequences to the benefits of the Redeemed only; but extended to the Exaltation and Glory of the Redeemer, and to other uſes.

'Tis certain; God can, if he pleaſes, bring-about his decrees merely by his own immediate act and power: but where, and when, do we find this to be the method of his Providence? —When do we ſee his immediate hand in the eſtabliſhment of Kingdoms, and the deſtruction of Armies? On the contrary, if he would deſtroy a nation, he raiſes up a *Pul* or a *Nebuchadnezzar*; if he would deliver it, he raiſes up a *Cyrus*; if he would ſhew his power in the puniſhment

niſhment of obſtinate Infidelity, he raiſes up into a conſpicuous ſtation a *Pharaoh:* but it never appears, in the old or new Teſtament; that the ſupreme God, whom no eye hath ſeen or can ſee, ever acted *perſonally* in the affairs of Men, by his own immediate power; but as he made all things *by his* Son, ſo he performs all things *by Him*; or by ſome Angel who executes His commands(*y*). And the Reaſon, why God always chooſes to employ the actions of other Beings, ſeems to be this; that by conſidering and executing his commands, they may improve their moral characters; and thereby recommend themſelves to his Favour(*z*). And, if this be the caſe, we ſee the neceſſity of our Redemption's being effected by the mediation of a Saviour.

If it be aſked; what neceſſity there was for the *Sufferings* and *Death* of a Mediator, in order to his becoming a Saviour; it may be anſwered, in general; that they were manifeſtly neceſſary to many great and excellent purpoſes. But whether they were ſo abſolutely neceſſary, that he could not have been a Saviour without them; (by receiving the Power of raiſing the Dead, forgiving Sins, and giving eternal Life) even

(*y*) *Col.* i. 15. *John* vi. 46. *Heb.* xi. 27. *John* iv. 12. I *Tim.* vi. 16. See Letter II. p. 229, 230. Notes.

(*z*) In which ſenſe it is, that *Chriſt* aſſerts; therefore does my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my Life, that I may take it again. *John* x. 17.

though

though the *Jews* had received him as their Lord and King; is what we have not any evidence from Scripture to aſſert. But on the other hand; we cannot conceive any other way by which *Chriſt* could have received theſe Powers, as an act of Judicial Reward, except by Sufferings; and if that be true, his Sufferings muſt ſeem neceſſary to gaining ſuch Powers, in ſuch a manner, to conſummate the moſt holy and perfect his Character.—If it be ſaid, that they were neceſſary to fulfil the Propheſies; this is not a neceſſity in order to his becoming a Saviour, but in order to his fulfilling the Propheſies; and therefore is not the Subject of the preſent inquiry: for, if the *Jews* would have received him as their King, they would not have ſlain him; and, if they would not have ſlain him, theſe Propheſies would not have been given.

Let us examine what light we can find in the Scripture, in anſwer to this queſtion. The end, for which *Chriſt* came, was in general to do the Will of the Father; and to finiſh his Work. He was to make a new Covenant with the houſe of *Iſrael*, and to gather *Jacob*; and to reconcile the World to God. And, if our nation would have received him for *Meſſiah* the Prince, and been gathered to him; it does not appear, from any thing in the new Teſtament, but that the end of his Miſſion would have been accompliſhed; without his Sufferings and Death: for they would not have ſlain him, if they had liſtened

to the voice of the Prophets; and known the day of their Viſitation. And *Chriſt* himſelf, in his prayer the evening before his death, "if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me;" ſeems to conſider it in this light: *viz.* that it might be *poſſible* for him to be the Saviour of the World, without his being ſlain by the *Jews:* for, in any other ſenſe, if his death was *abſolutely neceſſary* to his compleating that Office, he muſt ſeem to expreſs a deſire of abandoning it; which is highly abſurd to ſuppoſe. And this ſenſe of the words is confirmed by another prayer; in which he conſiders the work he came to do, as *already* finiſhed; *before* his Death. "I have glorified Thee on Earth; I have *finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do:* and now, O Father, glorify me, &c(*a*)." The Death of *Chriſt* therefore ſeems to have been rather neceſſary, in *atteſtation* to his divine Miſſion; as being the *faithful Witneſs* to the Doctrines which he preached to a ſinful generation; and to manifeſt the Love of God to the World; in giving him up for us all, and other *conſequences* of it: than any way neceſſary *a priori*, in the nature of the thing; as if his Death had been *abſolutely* neceſſary to conſtitute him a Saviour and Redeemer, whether the *Jews* had received him as their *Meſſiah* and King, or not.

(*a*) *Rev.* i. 5. iii. 14.

Mr.

Mr. *Foſter* ſays, "the Death of *Chriſt* was undoubtedly predetermined by God; but that does not prove, that it did not happen in the *natural courſe* of things: that is, in the ſame Manner, and by the ſame kind of Inſtruments, as the death of other Prophets and righteous men, who have preached Repentance and Amendment to an ignorant and degenerate age(*b*)." And in another place he ſays; "his Suffering was the natural conſequence of attempting to reform the manners of a degenerate age, and oppoſing the ſuperſtition and darling prejudices of the *Jewiſh* nation; and could not be avoided, but by ſuch a compliance on his part; as would have been inconſiſtent with Virtue and Integrity: or by a miraculous interpoſition of Providence(*b*).

It is certain, ſays Mr. *Emlyn* (*c*); that "God never did appoint and order the *Jews* to ſhed *Chriſt*'s blood: but, on the contrary, forbad them to kill him. When he ſent him among them, it was to turn them from their Sins; and the end he propoſed was this, *Surely they will reverence my Son*. And therefore to ſhew how they acted againſt his Will: God cenſures thoſe

(*b*) *Foſter* againſt *Tindal*, p. 332, and 364.

(*c*) *Emlyn*'s Tracts. Examin. of Mr. *Leſlie*'s laſt dial. p. 254. He obſerves; that the text, *Acts* iv. 27, 28. may be more properly tranſlated thus: Both *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate* were gathered together againſt thy holy Child *Jeſus*, whom thou haſt anointed to do what thy hand and council determined to be done.

hands,

hands, as *wicked*, that killed him; and punish-ed them with the moſt dreadful but illuſtrious Vengeance. *Mat.* xxii. 37. *Acts* ii. 23." If God had *commanded* the *Jews* to ſlay him; it might have looked as if his Death had been ſo *neceſſary*; that his office of a Saviour could not have been executed without it: whereas by a bare *permiſſion*, it was made to look like an *accidental* thing; done contrary to his Orders(*c*).—And indeed, to ſuppoſe it *neceſſary* that the *Jews* ſhould ſlay *Him*; in order to bring about their *own* Salvation, and reconcile themſelves to God; ſeems to require, that in order to gain forgive-neſs for their paſt Sins they muſt neceſſarily per-petrate another, of much deeper guilt than what they had before committed: And to ſuppoſe this to be any otherwiſe determined by God, than any other wicked action which he foretells; is inconſiſtent with his Attributes.

But though the Sufferings and Death of Chriſt do not appear *a priori* to have been ſo abſolutely *neceſſary* to our Salvation, that he *could not* have been a Saviour *without them*; even though *Iſrael* had received him as their *Meſſiah* and King: Yet, as this was not the caſe, but on the con-trary, his Death became the neceſſary conſe-quence of his Miniſtry; the Beauty and Conſiſt-ency of the divine Œconomy in ſuffering him to be ſlain, is very evident in the conſequences

(*c*) *Ibid.*

of

of it *a poſteriori:* and particularly, as it was by this extraordinary act of Benevolence, in giving himſelf for us all, that the World was to be reconciled to God.

In like manner; though we do not ſee *a priori* the *neceſſity*, that Mankind ſhould be ſaved by one of their own Race; that, as by *Man* came *Death*, ſo alſo by *Man* ſhould come the *Reſurrection* of the dead; which St. *Paul* ſpeaks-of as a matter of great Propriety (*d*): yet this alſo, when conſidered *a poſteriori*, in its Conſequences, will appear to be no leſs beautifully connected with our Salvation; as a *Mean* and *Motive* to that End:—whether we conſider him as our *Example*; increaſing in Wiſdom, as he increaſed in Stature (*e*); and living without Sin, though in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh (*f*); and learning

(*d*) I *Cor.* xv. 21. *Heb.* ii. 14. See Letter V. p. 614.

(*e*) *Luke* ii. 52.

(*f*) *Rom.* viii. 3. By what St. *Paul* ſays here, that in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh *Chriſt* condemned Sin in the Fleſh, I underſtand him to mean; That *Chriſt* did prove Sin committed in the Fleſh to be the proper Subject of Condemnation, by ſhewing that it was not the unavoidable Conſequence of a Life in the Fleſh: and this he ſhewed; by taking Fleſh upon himſelf, and yet remaining free from Sin. *Heb.* iv. 15.—This was the opinion of *Clemens Alexandrinus*; viz. that *Chriſt* aſſumed Fleſh, thereby to demonſtrate unto Men their ſufficient Power to obey the Commandments. See *Gale*'s Court of the *Gent.* part iii. p. 131. The *Phœnix*, Vol. ii. No. 22. *Brevis Diſquiſitio*, ch. x. p. 337.

Obe-

Obedience, by the things which he ſuffered (*g*); and becoming perfect by Sufferings, that he might become the Captain of our Salvation, and lead many ſons unto glory (*h*);—or whether we conſider him as our *Judge*; touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and in all points tempted as we are;—or whether we conſider his becoming a Man, only as analogous to the general method of Providence, that Mankind ſhould be helpful to one another; and the Virtues of *Particulars* bring down Bleſſings upon the *Community*:—or as neceſſary in order to give *Evidence* to his Miſſion, as the faithful Witneſs even to Death raiſed up by God in atteſtation to his Doctrine;—in whatever manner we conſider theſe things, the Humiliation, Sufferings, and Death of *Chriſt* appear to be *neceſſary* to our Salvation; in the ſame ſenſe, as his whole Life and every part of his Conduct among us were *neceſſary*: that is, each Action was *neceſſary* to ſome particular purpoſe, by which God deſigned to bring-about our Salvation; and the whole together *neceſſary* to compleat all the purpoſes, that is, the whole Deſign, in that particular manner.—Give me leave to obſerve here upon the whole; what an amazing Idea we muſt have of the infinite Power and Wiſdom of God; and what a demonſtrable Proof of the infinite Folly

(*g*) *Heb.* v. 8. (*h*) *Heb.* ii. 10.

and

and Impotency of Sin: when we reflect, that ſo unpardonable an act of Wickedneſs as the crucifying the *Meſſiah* ſhould be directed by almighty God to ſo great and glorious a *Cataſtrophe*, as the ſalvation of the World—If this be the caſe; how can we imagine it poſſible, that the Sin of Men, or of any Beings ſuperior to Men, ſhould ever be able to counteract His Deſigns! They may indeed produce a greater Intricacy in the Conduct of Providence; and ſuch as may be beyond the finite Capacity of any Creature to inveſtigate, becauſe more complex; but the decrees of God will be equally accompliſhed, whatever means he pleaſes to make uſe of.

But here we are entangled for a few moments by an objection of the *Socinians*; with regard to the benefit of *Chriſt*'s example. If *Chriſt*, ſay they, had not been a *mere Man*, but of a ſuperior nature; he could not properly be propoſed as an Example to *mere Men*. His Powers would be ſo greatly ſuperior to his Temptations, that the *Weakneſs* of the Fleſh would be abſorbed in the Divinity; and the Remembrance of his former Glory being ever preſent to him, his Temptations could have no power over him: And therefore he can neither be a proper Example to us, by his Victory over Sin, to *labour* after Righteouſneſs; which he preſerved without any *labour:* nor an encouragement to imitate a

Character, which we muſt deſpair of attaining-to.

To this it may be anſwered; that, when *Chriſt* is ſaid to be an Example to us, it means; either that he was a *Warning*, *Admonition*, or *Leſſon of Inſtruction*, to follow his Steps and receive his Reward; or elſe that he was a *Copy* for us to imitate, with the ſame Hopes in view.

Let us firſt conſider; whether *Chriſt*, the Angel of the Covenant, be not a more proper Leſſon of inſtruction to us, than any Man could be. As to the objection, that "the Weakneſs of the Fleſh is abſorbed in the Divinity;" it may juſt as ſafely be aſſerted, that the Power of the Divinity is abſorbed in the Fleſh: for as to the Conſequence of the Conjunction of the Angel of the Covenant with the Fleſh in which he was incarnate; or in what degree the Temptations of *Chriſt* might affect Him; that is, how eaſy or how difficult it might be for *Chriſt* to reſiſt them: I preſume we are intirely ignorant; and have no right to argue from *our* Ignorance againſt the Fact itſelf(*i*). All that we can ſafely

(*i*) Mr. *Emlyn*, in his anſwer to Dr. *Bennet*, tells him; that his Adverſaries believed, that the *Word* emptied himſelf [of his great Glory] and became like the rational Soul of another Man; which is limited by the bodily Organs, and is in its Infancy as it were dormant; for by the ſettled laws of Nature it exerts not then its nobleſt Powers: ſo that the Man is at firſt like an Animal; and thoſe powers and

ſafely aſſume upon this Subject, is this; that a Being of the moſt conſummate Wiſdom and Perfection did actually go through great Affliction, and Death itſelf, with Patience, Faith, and Reſignation; and was rewarded by God in his time, for all that he did and ſuffered in obedience to his Will: and from theſe *Data* we argue, as follows.

1. If a Being ſo greatly ſuperior to Man, in Wiſdom and every Perfection, did actually diveſt himſelf of his Glory, which he had with the Father before the world was (*k*); and take upon him the Form of a Servant, and perform all the ſame Duties, which a Man is required to do,

and latent faculties diſcover themſelves gradually, as the Organs admit: and probably never diſplay themlelves in all their full ſtrength, in this groſs and feculent body; nor till it is ſpiritualized and refined at the Reſurrection. Now, according to this Opinion of the *Word*, which makes our Saviour's humiliation very aſtoniſhing and endearing, and which is the true and great myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſt in the fleſh; it will be eaſy for them to admit the *Word* to be deprived of its former extraordinary Abilities, and to become ſubject to ſore Temptations and great Afflictions in reality; alſo to grow in Wiſdom, as others do; though at the ſame time it did conduct his actions, and ſomething very extraordinary too appeared in him at Twelve Years of age, (even before his great Union with the Holy Ghoſt) when he reaſoned ſo wonderfully with the *Jewiſh* Doctors; ſo that it acted as the bodily organs admitted. *Emlyn*'s Tracts. Vol. II. p. 183.

(*k*) *John* xvii. 5.

in obedience to his Will; It is a leſſon of Inſtruction to us; that no Being, let him be ever ſo great and wiſe, is ſuperior to the practiſe of the ſame moral Virtues which we are obliged to; or to a ſtate of Humiliation, when ever it may be agreeable to the wiſdom of God to allot it to him: And conſequently, that the practiſe of Righteouſneſs, and ſubmiſſion to the Will of God by a perfect Obedience, are agreeable to the higheſt Wiſdom and Rectitude; and ought to be practiſed by all inferior Beings, who would aim at a praiſe-worthy Character, by a right and wiſe Conduct.

2. As the ſupreme God of the Univerſe did appoint a ſtate of Affliction and Death to be gone through by ſo great and good a Being, as his own beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed; it is a ſure Indication and Leſſon to us, that whom God loveth he chaſteneth; and an Encouragement to bear with Patience whatever Afflictions we ourſelves may ſuffer; conſidering them as the appointments of a wiſe and good God, and tending to wiſe and good purpoſes.

3. As in recompenſe of *Chriſt*'s Obedience, he was highly exalted and rewarded; this is a leſſon of Inſtruction to teach us Faith and Confidence in God's Juſtice and Bounty; that if We ſuffer

ſuffer with *Chriſt*, we ſhall alſo be glorified together(*l*).

But, if the *Socinian* conſiders this Example, merely as a Copy for our Imitation; and imagines, that, if *Chriſt* had never exiſted in a ſtate ſuperior to Man, he would be a more proper Copy for our imitation: he muſt conſider it either as more *eaſy* to imitate in ſuch a caſe,—or as more *likely* for us to chooſe it for our imitation,—or as a greater *Encouragement* to our imitation, becauſe we ſhould have a better proſpect and hope of coming up to the perfection of the Copy. To which it may be anſwered;

1. The Example or Copy could not be more *eaſy* to imitate; becauſe it is the ſame Copy, under both ſuppoſitions; whether the Perſon who ſet it us be a *mere man*, or ſuperior to a man; and, where the Copy is the ſame, the Difficulty of imitation muſt be the ſame.

2. The Example of a *mere man* would not be more *likely* for us to chooſe for our imitation, than the Example of a ſuperior Being. For, the more perfect any Being is, the more we think to pleaſe God by the Imitation of him; and the leſs perfect he is, the leſs good we can promiſe ourſelves by being like him.

In the Imitation of a *mere man*, we muſt be often full of doubts; whether the Example be

(*l*) I *Pet.* ii. 19, 21. *Rom.* viii. 17.

fit

fit for Imitation: But, in the Imitation of the Son of God, we are under no ſuch difficulty; the belief of his ſuperior Nature being an aſſurance to us, that it is a Copy fit for the Imitation and Improvement of Man; for that very reaſon, becauſe it is ſet us by a Being of Wiſdom and Perfection infinitely ſuperior to Man.

The *Socinian* may perhaps reply; that we can have no doubt of the Perfection of the Copy ſet us by Chriſt, though he be a *mere Man:* For this mere Man was filled by the Holy Ghoſt, and God gave not his Spirit by *meaſure* unto him; and therefore *His* Example may be well concluded to be faultleſs and without Spot. It is true: but, if this be the caſe, it comes under their own Objection; for a Man *ſo* helped and aſſiſted by a ſupernatural Power of the Spirit without meaſure given unto him(*m*), is no greater Encouragement to *us* to hope for Succeſs in our Reſiſtency againſt Temptation, who are not ſo aſſiſted; than if he were a Superior Being, and partaker of the divine Nature.

3. But, in truth, the whole of this objection ariſes from the Miſtake of imagining no Example is fit for our Imitation; but what we are able to come up to: an objection which may be made to ſeveral other Texts of Scripture upon the ſame Miſtake; as when we are commanded to be

(*m*) *John* iii. 34.

followers

followers of God, as dear Children (*n*); and to be perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect (*o*).

When *Phidias* and *Apelles* ſet before their Scholars Copies for their Imitation and Improvement, they did not chooſe-out thoſe that were moſt faulty; but thoſe which were moſt perfect. Theſe the Scholars were to imitate, as well as they could; and their Maſters, not Themſelves, were the proper Judges of their Improvement; whereas a faulty Picture or Statue would have led them into Errors, and a perfect one was choſen to lead them to Perfection by degrees. And upon this account it is; that no other Being has ever yet appeared in the World, that could be exhibited as a perfect Exemplar; but *Chriſt* alone. Nay, even the *ideal* portrait of a perfect Man, which was drawn by the *Stoïcs*, was greatly defective in many particulars; in ſome, it was carried far beyond the Life; in others, it as much fell ſhort of it. It appears therefore; that this Objection of the *Socinians* is raſh, and without Foundation.

If it be aſked; why *Chriſt* was the *particular Perſon* choſen by God, rather than any *other*, to be the Mediator between God and Man and ſent upon the gracious meſſage of Pardon and Forgiveneſs, and ordained to undergo Pain and

(*n*) *Eph.* v. 1. (*o*) *Mat.* v. 48.

Death

Death for our ſakes—the reaſon appears to be; becauſe he was more intimately *related* to us, and more nearly *concerned* in our Welfare, and conſequently in our Salvation; than any other Being in the Univerſe could be: for we were created *by* him, and *for* him. There is one Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſays the Apoſtle; *by* whom are all things, and we (δι᾽ ἀὐτοῦ) *by* him(*p*). We are therefore the work of his Hands; and conſequently, the natural objects of his *Care* and *Love*; for it is impoſſible to conceive a nearer and dearer Relation. But this is not all; we are not only created *by* him, [δι᾽ ἀὐτοῦ] but *for* him; [εἰς ἀὐτὸν] being choſen *in* him [ἐν ἀὐτῷ] before the foundation of the World, to inherit his Kingdom (*q*); to be joint heirs with him in his inheritance(*r*), which he hath purchaſed; and there to live and reign with him(*s*), and be glorified together(*t*). By reaſon of which intimate connection he calls us his Brethren, and his Children whom God hath given him(*u*), parts of the ſame Building(*x*), members of the ſame Body, of his Fleſh, and of his Bones(*y*)—It is upon account

(*p*) I *Cor.* viii. 6.—*Col.* i. 16. εἰς ἀὐτὸν is explained to ſignify the *final* Cauſe, by *Valla* and *Eraſmus*—*in reſpect of him*, that is, that he might rule over them; by *Vatablus*, *to his Glory*; by *Piſcator*, *Beza*, &c. *by* him, as the Cauſe; and *for* him, as the End; ſays *Whitby* ad locum.

(*q*) *Mat.* xxv. 34. (*r*) *Rom.* viii. 17. (*s*) II *Tim.* ii. 12. (*t*) *Heb.* ii. 2. (*u*) ii. 11, 13. (*x*) *Eph.* ii. 14, 15. (*y*) *Eph.* v. 30.

of

of this *love* and *regard* to us, that God hath particularly choſen *Him* above all other Beings to be our Prince and Saviour, to bring millions of his Creatures to glory and honour and immortality, and make them partakers of the divine Nature (*z*): to die no more, but to be equal to the Angels and Children of God (*a*).

No other Being therefore do we know-of, who was ſo proper to be ſent into the World for our Salvation, as *He*; no *other*, who would be ſo faithful a Mediator, or ſo indulgent a Judge; no *other*, who would with ſuch unbounded Benevolence diſpenſe the free gift of eternal Life to all, who ſhould be meet and fit to receive it; and ſave to the uttermoſt all ſuch as ſhould come unto God by him: no *other*, who would look upon *our* Salvation as a Reward done to *himſelf*; and a Joy that was ſet before him, and a Recompenſe and Satisfaction of all his Labours, Sufferings and Death: And, what is of the higheſt conſequence to be conſidered, there is no *other* Being in the Univerſe, that we know-of; who by his meritorious Obedience hath gained an everlaſting Kingdom, and purchaſed a poſſeſſion by his Merits, which he hath power and deſire

(*z*) II *Peter* i. 4.
(*a*) *Luke* xx. 36.

to beſtow upon us; nor any *other*, capable of gaining ſuch a reward; or of ſufficient Benevolence to have gone through ſuch difficulties to obtain it for us.

But the conſequences of *Chriſt*'s mediation, as I have already hinted, are not confined to Mankind alone; as if *they* only were advantaged by it, and the Salvation of Mankind by *Chriſt* were unconnected with the Government of the Univerſe: for *all* intelligent Beings, who are acquainted with the hiſtory of his Abaſement and Exaltation, are inſtructed by it in the *ſame* Principles; and actuated by the *ſame* Motives. Even the holy *Angels* have here an Example before them, moſt worthy of *their* Study and Imitation; and ſufficient to confirm *them* in the conſtant practice of Faith and Obedience. For though ſome of them have formerly fallen from Righteouſneſs, and kept not their firſt *eſtate*; who are reſerved unto the judgment of the great day (*c*): yet the hiſtory of *Jeſus Chriſt* is of itſelf ſuf-

(*c*) *Jude*—6. Some *Chriſtians* read the Text of *Deut.* xxxii. 8. according to the verſion of the LXX. where it runs thus: When the Moſt High divided the Nations, when he ſeparated the Sons of *Adam*, he appointed the bounds of the nations according to the number of the Angels of *God*. And they underſtand the Text of St. *Jude* of thoſe

ſufficient to prevent any farther Apoſtacy among them for the future. Here they experience the *Righteouſneſs of God* clearing itſelf, from the moſt intricate and unaccountable Appearance of *ſuffering* Excellence and *ſucceſsful* Malice, in a method beyond their Conception; and yet in a plain and intelligible manner, when revealed; agreeable to the analogy of his Government in other caſes: Here they find an example in *Jeſus Chriſt* of an abſolute Faith and Dependence on God's Righteouſneſs, and a perſevering Obedience unto the end, under amazing Difficulties and Afflictions, and all Infirmities of the Fleſh; raiſed and rewarded by God, in his own determinate time and manner, to a ſtate of the higheſt Glory: all the malice and power of his enemy being reduced into ſubjection under his feet. To ſee the Pride and Wickedneſs of the ſubtle and powerful, thus conquered by the humble Obedience and Righteouſneſs of the truly wiſe, is ſufficient to manifeſt in fact, (which is the ſtrongeſt and moſt prevailing argument poſſible;) that, however intricate the circumſtances of things may appear to the imperfect view of Men or Angels; yet Faith in God, and Obe-

thoſe Angels, who did not take a proper care of their particular Diſtricts.

dience to his Commands, will certainly at laſt ſurmount all Difficulties; and perſonal Merit meet a ſure Reward. And thus through the whole Creation, wherever this hiſtory ſhall be known, not only among Men, but alſo among the Principalities and Powers in heavenly places(*d*), who were formerly deſirous to look into theſe Myſteries (*e*); it will influence them with a more prevailing Faith and Steadineſs to worſhip and obey the King of Heaven; all whoſe works are Truth, and his ways Judgement; and thoſe who walk in Pride he is able to abaſe(*f*).

I have now fully conſidered the three Propoſitions, which I intended to examine in this Letter; and proved them to be the Doctrines of the new Teſtament, agreeable to the Nature of God and Man, and to the former Revelation given to our Fathers: and I imagine by ſo doing I have ſufficiently apologized for my preſent Faith. Nothing remains to complete my Deſign, but only to explain ſome few Texts of Scripture which have been miſunderſtood; and obviate ſome few Objections to the *Chriſtian* Scheme. But theſe are more properly poſt-

(*d*) *Eph.* i. 9.
(*e*) I *Peter* i. 12.
(*f*) *Dan.* iv.

poned

poned to another Letter, by way of Appendix; than ſuffered to interrupt the Courſe of the Argument in theſe, which I have already gone through.

End of the SIXTH LETTER.

LETTER THE SEVENTH.

But this I confeſs unto Thee; that, after the way which they call *Hereſy*, ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers: believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets. *Acts* xxiv. 14.

IN my fifth Letter, when I was conſidering the opinions of *Grotius*, *Stillingfleet*, and others; *viz.* that God *could not* forgive Sin, except the Son of God ſhould ſuffer as a Sacrifice for the Expiation of it, by undergoing the Puniſhment which the Sin deſerved; I examined the Doctrine ſo far, as to ſhew; that God has the *Power*, conſiſtent with his *Juſtice*, of remitting entirely the puniſhment of the Sinner, of his own *free Grace:* which was all that the ſubject

ject I was there conſidering required(*a*)—But whether the paſſing-over the puniſhment of the Sinner, was to be brought-about by *transferring* it upon the head of an *innocent* Perſon; was left to be conſidered afterwards—There are ſome other ſubjects, beſides this, which I have touched upon in my former Letters; but could not ſufficiently explain, as I went along, without taking-off your Attention to the main argument by ſuch long digreſſions: I ſhall now therefore conſider them all together; and ſo make this a Letter of Diſſertations upon various ſubjects.

I have already proved (*b*); that Guilt is entirely *perſonal*, and inſeparable from the Agent; and cannot poſſibly deſcend from one Perſon to another: and that Puniſhment cannot extend beyond the Guilt, without Injuſtice: and conſequently, the Puniſhment due to *Adam* could not extend, *as a Puniſhment*, to his innocent Poſterity. But the doctrine I was then expoſing, *viz.* the Injuſtice of puniſhing the Innocent for the Sins of the Guilty, muſt be here diſcuſſed more fully; becauſe the ſtate of the Queſtion with regard to the Sufferings of *Chriſt*, is a little different from that of puniſhing *Adam*'s Poſterity: and Bp. *Stillingfleet* has laid it in the faireſt light it is capable of, by conſidering it as undergone *voluntarily* and by *choice*; which is

(*a*) See *Whichcote*'s Aphor. 268, 276, 536, 701, 739, 1002, &c. (*b*) Letter V.

not

not ſuppoſed to be the caſe of *Adam*'s Deſcendents.

His words, which I have before quoted, are theſe: "that, notwithſtanding his Innocency, a perſon may oblige himſelf, by ſome act of his own Will, to undergo that Puniſhment, which *otherwiſe* he did not deſerve; which Puniſhment, in that caſe, will be *juſt* and agreeable to Reaſon(*c*)."

This I ſhall ſhew to be a Miſtake; though I muſt confeſs, after the *Chriſtians* had formed a notion, contrary to Scripture; that the ſons of *Adam* were to be puniſhed for the Sin, which *He* had committed before their Exiſtence; they could ſcarce avoid ſuppoſing, that another Perſon ſhould be puniſhed for the Sins which they commit *themſelves:* for it would be hard to puniſh them for *both.* But, what good can accrue, from puniſhing the *wrong* perſon, rather than the *right*; the *innocent*, inſtead of the *guilty*; does not appear very clear: Nor does it appear, that any Thanks are due from me to a Judge; who forgives me a Sin, that I did not commit. Moreover, as no Being in the Univerſe is more merciful than God himſelf; if any one hath interceded with him to forgive, where God himſelf was *unwilling* to do it; ſuch an Interceſſion muſt be improper, and betray an Error in Judg-

(*c*) *Stilling fleet* on the Sufferings of *Chriſt*, folio, 303. ect. 397.

ment: and it muſt be highly derogatory to the perfection of God to comply with it. And therefore I dare not ſuppoſe, that *Jeſus Chriſt* did ever petition for any thing; which God was not as willing to grant [δωρεὰν] freely or *gratis*, as the Intereeſſor was to intercede for it *gratis:* nor that the Interceſſor would think of ſhewing Mercy, where the Supreme Being ſaw fit to be ſevere: Much leſs could it be poſſible; that the God of all Mercies ſhould require an Equivalent of Payment, for an act of Mercy; which *Chriſt* was not only deſirous that we ſhould receive, but willing to go through great difficulties and diſtreſſes to procure for us; even ſo far as to pay the Debt, or undergo the Puniſhment himſelf: For, in ſuch caſe, as Dr. *Clarke* obſerves; "no Acknowledgment is due to Him, to whom the debt is paid; but to Him that paid it(*d*)." Nor is it poſſible that God ſhould require of *Chriſt* to pay a debt, which was not due from Him; or receive it, if it could be offered. But above all Conception it is moſt contrary to the divine Attributes, that God ſhould be ſo deſirous of Puniſhment, which he calls by the prophet his Work, his *ſtrange* Work; his Act, his *ſtrange* Act(*e*); as to inflict it upon the *beſt* of Beings: chooſing the moſt *improper* Perſon in the Uni-

(*d*) *Clarke*'s ſermons; octavo, Vol. i. 305.

(*e*) *Iſ.* xxviii. 21. *extrancum* factum ſuum, *alienum* opus ſuum.

verſe

verſe to puniſh, as being the beſt beloved by him, and the moſt perfect; rather than not inflict it upon ſome one. All theſe abſurdities follow from the notion, that *Chriſt* was *puniſhed* for the Sins of Man; in the ſenſe, in which a *guilty* perſon is *puniſhed:* and there is no other proper meaning to the word. And yet this is the opinion held among ſome *Chriſtians*; though there is not a ſingle word of the Guilt of *Chriſt*, or his Puniſhment, in the whole new Teſtament; and all theſe difficulties may be avoided, by adhering to the words of Scripture; and diſtinguiſhing what it *does* ſay, from what it *does not* ſay, that is, that he *ſuffered* and *died*; whereas it never ſays, that he underwent any *Puniſhment*.

Now, though the difference between theſe be very remarkable; yet, as it ſerves ſome Ends to confound them, and particularly as it gives an opportunity to the Deiſt(*f*), to make the *Sufferings* of *Chriſt*, under the Idea of a *Puniſhment*, appear *inconſiſtent* with the divine Juſtice; it may be neceſſary to ſhew, wherein they differ.

And 1. Suffering may be the natural Effect of matter and motion, without any act of Volition; as when a Houſe falls, and thereby a Perſon breaks a limb, or loſes his life. But Puniſhment is the act of a *reaſonable* Being, founded upon an *act of Judgement* and Condemnation.

(*f*) *Clarke*'s ſermons; Vol. I. p. 305. *Octavo.*

2. Puniſhment or Reward *finiſhes* and *compleats* the whole that is due to every moral Action; whether it be worthy of the one, or the other.

3. When an action deſerves Affliction; and the Agent in conſequence of it, is by a *judicial* act condemned to ſuffer, as he deſerved; and all that was *due* to him upon that account, is compleated, ſo that there remains no *debt* or *demand*; ſuch an Affliction is properly a Puniſhment. But,

4. When a Perſon ſuffers an Affliction, which was *not due* to him; or which he did *not deſerve* to ſuffer by any bad action: or when he has received an *exceſs* of Affliction, *above* what his Actions have deſerved: in theſe caſes, there remains to be paid a *Recompenſe*, in order to balance the account between what he had *deſerved*, and what he had *received*; nor can the account be fairly ſettled, till that recompenſe be paid; and the recompenſe itſelf balances the account, and there remains no debt or demand on either ſide: ſuch an affliction, or ſuch an exceſs of Affliction, where a recompenſe is due, is not properly a *Puniſhment*; but only an Affliction or Suffering.

He therefore, that has a juſt expectation of Reward, in recompenſe for his ſufferings, cannot properly be ſaid to be *puniſhed*; but only to he *afflicted*, or to *ſuffer*. And this was plainly the caſe of *Chriſt*; who, to this end, both died and

and roſe again and revived, that he might be Lord both of the Dead and Living: who, for the Joy that was ſet before him endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame; and is ſet down at the right hand of God.

In ſhort, Puniſhment is inconſiſtent with a Recompenſe; becauſe it is itſelf the recompenſe and balance of the account: which is the caſe of the criminal, who ſuffers the Law; in whom it would be ridiculous and abſurd to expect to be rewarded for his Sufferings. But Suffering, when diſtinguiſhed from Puniſhment, is the fate of every one; who undergoes pain, or labour, or trouble of any kind, upon any account but that of Guilt. And therefore, as I argued before, with regard to the poſterity of *Adam*; ſo I argue now, with regard to Chriſt.

If God is juſt, he will not extend the Puniſhment beyond the Guilt; for, if he does, he puniſhes the Innocent: And, as *Guilt* is *perſonal*, and *inſeparable* from the agent; (for no one can be guilty of an act, in a proper ſenſe, but he that committed it;) it cannot be *transferred* from one Perſon to another; and conſequently, neither can the *Puniſhment:* and therefore *Chriſt* could not be puniſhed for *Us* by a *juſt* God; becauſe *He* could not be *guilty* of *our* Sins. And, if neither *Chriſt* is puniſhed, nor the *Criminal*; the *Sin* is not *puniſhed*, nor the *Law* of God *vindicated*. For Sin in itſelf is an abſtract Idea.

Abſtract

Abſtract the Sin from the mind of the Sinner, and it becomes an indifferent Action: It has no exiſtence, but in the obliquity of the Sinner's mind; and is in itſelf incapable of Reward or Puniſhment. Sin can in no ſenſe be puniſhed, but by the Sufferings of the Sinner: If any other perſon ſuffers puniſhment for it, he ſuffers unjuſtly; becauſe unconnected with the Guilt.

Now if the Puniſhment of the *Sin*, be underſtood to mean the Puniſhment of the *Sinner*; (which is the only ſenſe it is capable of:) then the Argument, that *Sin* muſt neceſſarily be puniſhed, that the Laws of God may be vindicated; will extend farther than is intended by thoſe who uſe it: for it will prove the neceſſity, that the *Sinner himſelf* ſhould be puniſhed: and then a *Subſtitute* can be of no uſe at all(*g*). For nothing can be more abſurd and inconſiſtent; than to ſuppoſe it neceſſary, that the Laws of God ſhould be vindicated by the Puniſhment of the Sinner; and yet the Sinner ſhould be allowed to eſcape unpuniſhed.

But what ſeems to be no leſs extraordinary, is the Concluſion which is drawn from this *Hypotheſis*; that God's hatred to Sin is beſt ſhewn, and the honour of his Laws beſt vindicated, by ſuch a Subſtitution: which is the ſame thing, when tranſlated out of ſophiſtry into common

(*g*) See the quotation from *Gale*; Letter V. p. 651. viz. part IV. chap. vi. § i. p. 369, 370.

ſenſe,

ſenſe, as to aſſert; that God's hatred to Sin is beſt ſhewn by forgiving the Sinner; and his love of Righteouſneſs, by puniſhing the Righteous: or that God's Laws are beſt vindicated by puniſhing an *innocent* Perſon, who hath never tranſgreſſed them; for the ſake of ſaving a *Tranſgreſſor*, who deſerved to be puniſhed for the breach of them. And all this abſurdity depends upon the ſophiſtical notion; that the *Sin* is to be puniſhed, and not the *Sinner*; which, if ever ſo true, would ſerve to no manner of purpoſe in reſtraining Vice; ſince if once the *Sinner* was ſatisfied, that He ſhould get clear from *perſonal* Puniſhment; he would not be likely to concern himſelf what would become of the *Sin*.

And the Injuſtice of puniſhing an *innocent* Perſon cannot be evaded, as Bp. *Stillingfleet* and other learned men have imagined; by ſaying that *Chriſt* underwent a *voluntary* puniſhment: becauſe, whether voluntary or involuntary, unleſs it can be proved, that the puniſhment was *juſt*, and what he *deſerved*, (which could not be, becauſe he was *innocent*); it is only aſſerting, that an *innocent* Perſon ſubmitted *voluntarily* to an *unjuſt* Sentence; and his *voluntary* ſubmiſſion to it made it *juſt*: which it is abſurd to ſuppoſe. And yet Dr. *Stillingfleet* has expreſſed himſelf, as if he would have us underſtand him in this ſenſe: for he ſays; "He may oblige himſelf, by an act of his own Will, to undergo that Puniſhment;

niſhment; which *otherwiſe* he did not deſerve. But how does his Submiſſion to it make him *deſerve* it? This is what can by no means be proved: For nothing can make him *deſerve* it, but perſonal *Guilt*. The patient Reſignation of the Sufferer has nothing to do with the Sentence of the Judge. The whole queſtion before him is, only whether the Culprit be *guilty*, or not *guilty*; and, if he condemns the *innocent* to ſuffer puniſhment, his Sentence is *unjuſt*.

Dr. *Samuel Clarke* ſays (*b*); Though to puniſh an *innocent* Perſon inſtead of the *guilty*, is evidently *unjuſt*; yet to *permit* an innocent Perſon to take it [that is, *puniſhment*] upon himſelf, is by no means ſo. And Bp. *Stillingfleet* ſays; that a Perſon, notwithſtanding his innocency, may *oblige himſelf*, by an act of his own, to undergo Puniſhment. So that, according to Dr. *Clarke*, God only *permits* Chriſt to ſuffer; and, according to Bp. *Stillingfleet*, *Chriſt obliges himſelf* to ſuffer. Be it ſo; but where are we now? Is not the queſtion entirely altered? If this be the truth, it is not *God* who puniſhes *Chriſt*, but *Chriſt* who puniſhes *himſelf* by God's permiſſion. And then, where is the neceſſity of God's vindicating his honour to the World; if he only *permits* it to be vindicated? On the other hand; how can it be

(*b*) Sermons, Vol. viii. p. 373, octavo; Vol. I. Serm. cxxxvii. p. 142. fol.

ſaid,

ſaid, that God has the Power to forgive; if the Forgiveneſs depends upon the Will of another Perſon? This Suppoſition deſtroys both his *abſolute* and *ordinate* Power (*i*): for, as *John Fox* tells us, in his Sermon at *Paul*'s Croſs (*k*); "Cauſe for Chriſt to die, there was not; as his Life was innocent, ſo there was no Law to condemn him. No; neither his Father, ſalving his juſtice, could lawfully inforce him; only his own good will, and obedience to his Father's will; and none other." Beſides does the Scripture ever uſe ſuch Language? did God only *permit* Chriſt to come into this world and die; or did he come, becauſe the Father *ſent* him?

As to what Dr. *Clarke* ſuppoſes, that *Chriſt* might take the puniſhment upon himſelf; If he means, that *Chriſt* could conſider it as a *puniſhment*; it is impoſſible: for he knew himſelf to be innocent; and that the puniſhing the innocent would be an abomination, in the ſight of God; becauſe unjuſt. Why then will not the *Chriſtians* clear themſelves of theſe difficulties, by keeping cloſe to the words of Scripture; and declaring, that he *ſuffered* for *us*; or that he *ſuffered* for *our Sins*, the juſt for the unjuſt; in which there is no difficulty? For he, who voluntarily undergoes any Affliction to ſave a *guilty* perſon, can no more be ſaid to be *puniſhed* for

(*i*) See Letter V. p. 651. (*k*) Page 49.

him; than if he underwent the ſame Affliction, to ſave an *innocent* one: the act being the ſame, in both caſes: And yet he may be ſaid to have *ranſomed* him, to have *ſacrificed* his life for him, and to have *redeemed* him by his blood; (if he *died* in the cauſe; whether the perſon, for whoſe ſake he ſuffered was innocent or guilty:) but he cannot be ſaid to be *puniſhed* for him; becauſe Puniſhment ſuppoſes Guilt in the perſon who ſuffers. Nay, though he ſhould judge himſelf to be *guilty*; (which he muſt do, if he ſubmitted to ſuffer as a Puniſhment;) the truth would be, that he had paſſed a falſe judgment upon himſelf: which would give no right to any one to puniſh him, who knew his Innocence. In ſhort, it is impoſſible that *Chriſt* ſhould conſider himſelf as *guilty*; and conſequently impoſſible for him to believe his *Sufferings* to be a *Puniſhment*; (and it is plain, that he *did* not; becauſe he ſuffered with a *Reward* in view; which is inconſiſtent with the nature of *Puniſhment*:) and it is impoſſible that God ſhould puniſh him; becauſe he was without Spot, at the very time he ſuffered Death.

It is worth while to obſerve; how this Doctrine of his puniſhing *Chriſt* for our Sins, hath been altered, and ſoftened, and given-up, inch by inch. The learned *Theophilus Gale*, ſpeaking of God's *abſolute* Juſtice, ſays; by this *abſolute* Juſtice and Dominion God can inflict the greateſt

eſt Torments, even of Hell itſelf, on the moſt innocent Creature; and he quotes *Suarez*, ſaying; we muſt allow that God, as ſupreme Lord, can inflict on an innocent Man all that evil that is in the Torments of Hell: and *Gale* adds; that God did *de facto* inflict the higheſt Torments on an innocent, pure, ſpotleſs Creature; even the human Nature of his own Son; it is moſt evident(*l*).

Bp. *Stillingfleet* ſoftens the matter, and ſays; Notwithſtanding his Innocency, a perſon may *oblige himſelf*, by ſome act of his own, to undergo that Puniſhment, which otherwiſe he did not deſerve; which Puniſhment in that caſe will be juſt and agreeable to Reaſon(*m*).

After him Dr. *Samuel Clarke* ſays; though to *puniſh* the Innocent, inſtead of the Guilty, is evidently *unjuſt*; yet to *permit* an innocent perſon to take it upon himſelf, is by no means ſo.

Laſtly, Mr. *James Foſter*, after all theſe Opinions had been canvaſſed and found wanting, expreſſes the ſame Doctrine with *John Fox*; "I muſt own, I cannot ſee how it could be unjuſt or tyrannical; to propoſe even to an innocent Perſon to ſuffer, with his own *free conſent*; in order to promote ſo great a good: eſpecially if we ſuppoſe, what the *Chriſtian* Revelation ex-

(*l*) Court of the *Gentiles*, partiv. p. 368. (*m*) Letter V. p. 642.

preſsly teaches in the preſent caſe; that he would be glorioufly and amply rewarded for it(*n*)."

If it be ſaid, that this is only a diſpute about *Words*; I anſwer, it is a diſpute of the utmoſt Conſequence to be preciſely underſtood in the true *Senſe*. For, if we allow the Sufferings of Chriſt to have been a Puniſhment; we muſt allow, that in puniſhing him, the Supreme Being acted an unjuſt part: and, as long as it is maintained to be a *Chriſtian* Doctrine, we can never expect that either *Jew*, *Mahometan*, or *Deiſt*, will be converted to *Chriſtianity*. But this is not the only inſtance; in which altering the Words of Scripture hath obſtructed the progreſs of *Chriſtianity*.

§ 2. There are ſome *Chriſtians*; who, in order to ſhew the Juſtice of God in the puniſhment of *Chriſt* for *our* Sins; and *our* Forgiveneſs by *his* Righteouſneſs; have invented a Notion, they pretend to find in the New Teſtament; which, if true, muſt deſtroy all our Reaſoning upon the nature of God's Juſtice; and all our Hopes in the practice of Virtue: and that is, the doctrine of *imputed* Sin; and *imputed* Righteouſneſs; by which they underſtand, that, on the one hand, *Our* Sins are all *imputed* to *Chriſt*; and He is puniſhed for them: and *His* Righteouſneſs is *imputed* to *Us*, and we are rewarded

(*n*) *Foſter* againſt *Tindal*, 334.

for

for it. But we may be as ſure, as we are of our own exiſtence; that a righteous and juſt God will neither *impute* Righteouſneſs, where it is not; nor over-look it, where it is: "for he that juſtifieth the Wicked, and he that condemneth the Juſt, even they both are an Abomination to the Lord(*o*)."

The Scripture Phraſe of *imputing* Righteouſneſs, in the true Senſe of it, as given us by the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, means neither more nor leſs than the *forgiveneſs* of Sin. He tells us; *David* deſcribeth the Man to whom God *imputeth* Righteouſneſs without Works: ſaying, Bleſſed are they, whoſe Iniquities are *forgiven*; and whoſe Sins are *covered*. Bleſſed is the Man, to whom the Lord will *not impute* Sin(*p*). Where we ſee, that *imputing* Righteouſneſs is equivalent to the *forgiving* Iniquities; the *covering* of Sin, and the *not imputing* of Sin: in which ſenſe, the Doctrine is very plain and intelligible; and the Figure of ſpeech very natural. For as He, that takes away an obſtruction to the Sight, is ſaid to give Sight; and He, that takes away an obſtruction to our Health, is ſaid to give Health: So He, that takes away Sin, which is an obſtruction to our Righteouſneſs; is ſaid to give or impute Righteouſneſs: and it is upon this account that *Chriſt* is called The Lord *our* Righteouſneſs.

(*o*) *Prov.* xvii. 15. (*p*) *Rom.* iv. 7.

§ 3. If

§ 3. If it be then aſked; upon what Ground the *Chriſtians* have founded the ſtrange Opinion of *vicarious Puniſhment*; ſo derogatory to the Attributes of God, and ſo contrary to the whole Tenor of Scripture: It muſt be reply'd; they have founded it upon *figurative* Expreſſions, taken *literally*; and upon Texts of Scripture written by *Jews*, and intended to be underſtood agreeably to *their* language, cuſtoms and religious ceremonies; and then interpreted by the cuſtoms and ceremonies of the Heathen Philoſophers, who had relinquiſhed Paganiſm and become *Chriſtians*.

The *Chriſtians* tell us of the many mixtures and additions, which *Philo* hath thrown into his works; out of a vain and eager deſire, which is alſo obſervable in *Joſephus*, to adapt the *Jewiſh* Laws and Theology to the Taſte of the reigning Philoſophy of the *Gentiles* of their Times(*q*). The obſervation is juſt: but this vain and eager deſire, has not been a failing peculiar to the *Jews*; but common to all Nations. Dr. *Henry More*, and more lately Dr. *Middleton*, have ſhewn it in many cuſtoms and ceremonies of the *Romiſh* Church; which appear to be old Heathen Rites new vamped and adapted to *Chriſtianity*: and therefore it is but juſt, that the *Chriſtians* ſhould bear their part in the accuſation; as well

(*q*) *Pyle* on *Heb.* i. 1.

as

as We: and we may ſafely return them the compliment they have beſtowed upon *Joſephus* and *Philo* with Intereſt; by making repriſals upon *Origen*, *Clem. Alexand.* and almoſt all their primitive Writers. For, when the Heathen Philoſophers, among which were many of the followers of *Plato*, did in great numbers receive the *Chriſtian* Religion; and very few of them knew any thing of the Idiom and Genius of the *Hebrew* language, or the nature of the *Jewiſh* ceremonies: they alſo ſeem to have been as *vainly eager* and *deſirous* to interpret the figures, alluſions, doctrines, and ceremonies, of the *old* Teſtament, and particularly their *Sacrifices*, according to the notions which they had imbibed among the *Heathens* before their converſion: ſometimes explaining the *Chriſtian* doctrine by the *Platonic* Philoſophy; ſometimes carrying the alluſions farther than was intended by the Writers; ſometimes giving their ceremonies a ſenſe entirely *Heatheniſh*; and thereby introducing a language into the *Chriſtian* Church, which the genuine ſyſtem of *Judaiſm* was a Stranger to. And among theſe *vain* and *eager* accommodations of *Judaiſm* to *Gentiliſm*, was introduced at firſt the notion of *vicarious Puniſhment*: for *Judaiſm* knows no ſuch doctrine; and if it was not the ſenſe of the *old* Teſtament, it can never be the ſenſe of the *new*.

§ 4. The

§ 4. The doctrine, which we find in the Gospels and Epistles, is this: that the Blood of *Christ* was shed FOR many(*r*), for the Remission of Sins; or, as it is expressed in other Words, the Son of Man came to give his Life a *ransom* FOR many(*s*). St. *Paul* expresses the same Doctrine variously. He gave himself a *ransom* FOR all(*t*). He gave himself FOR us, that he might *redeem* us from all Iniquity(*u*). He was delivered FOR our Offences(*x*). God gave him up FOR us all(*y*). He died FOR our Sins according to the Scriptures(*z*). He gave his Life FOR the Sheep(*a*): *Christ* our Passover was *sacrificed* FOR us(*b*).

All these Texts are manifestly intended to express the same Doctrine. And the first question, in order to explain the Sense of it, seems to be this; in what *sense* these things were done FOR Us; whether in our Stead, or on our Account, and for our Advantage. The *English* word FOR and the *Greek* words ἀντὶ, ὑπὲρ, &c. being capable of any one of these senses.

Now if the true Doctrine be, that these things were done upon our *Account*, or for our *Advantage*; the word FOR will have the same sense, in

(*r*) *Matt.* xxvi. 28. περὶ πολλῶν. (*s*) xx. 28, λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν, *Mar.* x. 45. i. e. for the *Many*, or for *All*; as I *Tim.* ii. 6. ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων. see *Dan.* xii. 2. (*t*) ὑπὲρ I *Tim.* ii. 6. (*u*) ὑπὲρ *Tit.* ii. 14. (*x*) διὰ *Rom.* iv. 25. (*y*) ὑπὲρ *Rom.* viii. 32. (*z*) I *Cor.* xv. 3. (*a*) *Jo.* x. 15. (*b*) ὑπέρ I *Cor.* v. 7.

all

all the Texts: but if the true Doctrine be, that they were done *in-ſtead-of*; the ſenſe of the word will not be the ſame, in the different Texts; but muſt be greatly varied. For *Chriſt* could not be delivered, *inſtead* of our offences; nor die, *inſtead* of us; for, if he did, we ſhould not die ourſelves: nor could he be our Paſſover, ſacrificed *for* us, *in our ſtead*; for we were never ſentenced to be ſacrificed: and the Paſſover(*c*) was not a Sin-offering; and therefore theſe things could not happen in our *ſtead*, but only upon our *account* and for our *advantage*(*d*).

If it be ſaid; that *Chriſt* gave himſelf a *Ranſom* for us, I *Tim.* ii. 6. and was therefore ſacrificed

(*c*) The *Paſchal* Lamb was not to atone or expiate; nor was it offered in any other ſenſe, than merely to ſave the *Iſraelites*; for their advantage, or on their Account. See *Sykes* on Redemption, 336. In the *Miſhna* and by *Maimonides* it is ſaid to be like the Peace-Offerings: it was all carried-away by the Proprietor, except the Blood and Inwards; and there was no meat and drink Offering, no Portion for the Prieſt, and no laying-on of Hands; as in expiatory Sacrifices.

(*d*) If any Streſs be laid upon the *Greek* Prepoſitions, we may obſerve; that, as *Chriſt* ſuffered ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν *for* Us; ſo we alſo are ſaid to ſuffer ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ, *for* Him: *Phil.* i. 29. not *inſtead* of him, but upon his *account*.—We alſo ſuffer διὰ δικαιοσύνην, not *inſtead* of Righteouſneſs; but on *account* of it: I *Pet.* iii. 14. So περὶ is uſed, *Acts* xxvi. 7.—and ἀντὶ, *Matt.* v. 28. an eye *for*, or on *account* of an eye. *Matt.* xvii. 27. give it *for* me and thee. *Rom.* ii. 17. I *Cor.* xi. 15. *Heb.* xii. 2, &c. See *Sykes* on Redemption, p. 311. 397. 215. 221. 197. 244. 252.

in our *ſtead*; it muſt be obſerved, that the payment of a Ranſom is no Sacrifice; and therefore no *vicarious* Sacrifice: it means no more, than that he died to ſave us—The Word *Ranſom* means *literally* the Price of Redemption: but this is only when the Redemption ſignifies *literally* a deliverance from captivity, by a Price paid. But as a deliverance from captivity may be brought-about by Power, or other means; the Word *Ranſom* in ſuch caſe muſt be *figurative*; and ſignify the power or other means, by which we are delivered: and the caſe muſt be the ſame, where there is no Captivity; but merely a deliverance from any kind of Affliction. Thus God redeemed the *Jews* from *Egypt*; not by a *price paid*, but by *power* and an *outſtretched arm*. And thus *Moſes* is called a Redeemer (though tranſlated a Deliverer, *Acts* vii. 35. λυτρωτὴν) and Dr. *Sykes* obſerves, that there are above *fifty* inſtances in the old Teſtament, where the word [λυτρῶν] to *ranſom*, means barely to *deliver*; without any Price or Ranſom paid at all. But, if a Ranſom muſt always ſuppoſe a Price paid: I would aſk, what was the Price paid by the redeeming Angel ſpoken-of by *Jacob*; and called the Angel that Redeemed him from all evil(*e*)?

Now our deliverance from Sin and Death by *Chriſt*, is an act of Power; like the deliverance

(*e*) *Gen.* xlviii. 16. this Redemption relates to ch. xxiii. 15. See alſo *Deut.* vii. 7.

from

from *Egypt*: and the Power of delivering was gained by a Life and Death of Obedience: for *Chriſt* ſuffered, and died, and revived; that he might be Lord of quick and dead. His Death therefore was not ſo *properly*, nor ſo *immediately*, the Ranſom or Price paid for our Redemption; as the price paid *in order to gain the power to redeem* and become a Prince and a Saviour: and our Redemption or Deliverance was the *Effect* of this Power, and is gained immediately by the exerciſe of it.—This will appear more plainly, when we conſider; that the ſame figurative expreſſions are uſed of God the Father; who is likewiſe called our Redeemer; and is ſaid to have bought us with a Price(*f*), and to have given-up his Son for us all. But to whom did God the Father pay the Price, or the Ranſom? certainly, to no one. The words therefore can be only figurative; and meaned to expreſs the method, by which God hath ſaved us; *viz.* by giving-up his *Son* to Death; as *Chriſt* hath ſaved us, by giving-up *himſelf*.—And this very ſmall difference, whether the Death of *Chriſt* be the immediate Cauſe of our Redemption and Deliverance from Sin and Death *by way of Ranſom*; or the immediate cauſe, by which *he gained the power to ranſom* or deliver; makes a very great difference in the Doctrines which follow from them: the *one* is Scripture, and the *other* not ſo;

(*f*) 1 *Cor.* vi. 20.

the *one* exalts our notions of the ſupreme Goodneſs, the *other* degrades them; the *one* ſuppoſes, that God had a great Scheme to accompliſh for the Redemption or Deliverance of man from Sin and Death; and that the ſufferings and death of *Chriſt* were proper to compleat it in the wiſeſt and moſt effectually manner; and that *Chriſt* was willing to undertake whatever God ſhould pleaſe to appoint, in order to accompliſh that end; and, accordingly he died, and for his obedience to death received as a reward the Power of ranſoming or delivering from Sin and Death; and as it was by his obedience to the Will of God, which was compleated by his Death, that he gained the power to ranſom or deliver; his Death itſelf is figuratively called a *Sacrifice*, and a *Ranſom*; though the *actual* deliverance was the *exerciſe* of that Power.—This is very intelligible, and agreeable to Wiſdom and Rectitude; ſo that in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word he was not ſo properly the Redemption and Ranſom, as the *Redeemer* and *Ranſomer*; that is, the Deliverer or Saviour.—The *other* doctrine is; that it was inconſiſtent with the nature of God's Government of the World, that he ſhould *forgive* a Sinner; without *vindicating* the honour of his Laws; and therefore mercifully paſſing-by the offenders, he puniſhes an innocent perſon in their ſtead; receiving *his* Puniſhment as a full Payment, Satisfaction and Ranſom. And thus

God

God Almighty, the moſt benevolent, juſt, and merciful, of all Beings in the Univerſe, is ſuppoſed to redeem us from Sin and Death, to which we were in captivity; by puniſhing the innocent inſtead of the guilty, rather than forgive us *freely*; as the Scripture declares that he has done.

The calling the Death of *Chriſt* a *Ranſom*, in the ſenſe of a Price paid for our deliverance, is certainly as near to the literal ſenſe, as a Figure can well be; but it is not preciſely the Truth; it is the Cauſe once removed, inſtead of the immediate and efficient Cauſe: for, though the Power of delivering or ranſoming was gained by his Death: yet the actual deliverance was effected by his Life: ſo that we are not ſaved by his Death, but by his Life(*g*): that is, by a voluntary exertion of that power which he gained by his death: His *Death* was therefore the *immediate* and *efficient* cauſe of his *power*; and the *Exertion of his power* the *immediate* and *efficient* cauſe of our Salvation(*b*). Whereas, if his death had been merely

(*g*) *Rom.* v. 10, &c.

(*b*) And therefore St. *Paul* argues, I *Cor.* xv. 29. elſe what ſhall they do who are baptiſed for the dead, ὑπερ νεκρων, if the dead riſe not at all?—*i. e.* to what purpoſe is it to be baptiſed into the religion of ſuch as will never riſe again to make good your hopes? νεκρων being uſed inſtead of νεκρυς, changes the particular caſe into a general aſſertion. *Homer* does the ſame thing; Odyſſ. Λ 293, by changing the feminine

merely a literal Ranſom or Redemption, it could have reached no farther than the penalty of the firſt Offence; and the regaining of what had been before loſt: but the effect of this power that was gained by death, or rather by his obedience to death, extends to another Life; and Happineſs in his Kingdom. See the Apoſtle's reaſoning on this ſubject(*i*).

Farthermore, if we conſider the death of *Chriſt* as the immediate cauſe of our deliverance, in a literal ſenſe; we muſt explain alſo in a literal ſenſe who it was that held us in Captivity; and not only to whom the Ranſom was paid by *Jeſus Chriſt*; but to whom the Price was paid by *God the Father*. The Ranſom could not be paid literally to God, for he is the Redeemer; and he redeemed us by giving-up his Son to death; and though we read, that we are redeemed *to* God; we never read of our redemption *from* him; and conſequently, the Ranſom and Price paid could not be literally paid to God: firſt, becauſe a literal Ranſom could not be paid to the Redeemer; or to the perſon who paid it; and ſecondly, if it were a literal Ranſom, it muſt be literally paid to the perſon who held us in

minine gender into a maſculine, when ſpeaking of *Nauſicaa*.

ὡς ἂν ἅλτοιο ποντίρου ἀνδρὸς ἀλιάσαιτο
ἕξειεν.

(*i*) *Rom.* v. 15, &c.

Captivity:

Captivity: but we were not in captivity to God, but to Sin and Death; (his Servants we were, to whom we obeyed:) and from theſe we were to be delivered and redeemed.

Was it then a literal Ranſom, which was to be paid to Sin and Death? This cannot be; becauſe there are no ſuch Perſons: there remains then no Perſon, to whom it could literally be paid; except we conſider ourſelves in Captivity to the *Devil*: but we never heard of any price that was paid to *Him*; we are delivered from *Him*, by an act of Regal Power. God anointed *Jeſus of Nazareth* with the Holy Ghoſt and with Power; who went-about doing good, and healing all thoſe who were oppreſſed by the *Devil*(*k*). He took Fleſh and Blood; that through death he might deſtroy him that hath the power of death; that is, the *Devil*(*l*). And Death is ſwallowed-up in *Victory*(*m*): and therefore we give thanks to God, who hath given us the *Victory* through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord (*n*); and this Victory over Death is the Victory over *Samael*, the Angel of Death; and conſequently, there can be no ranſom paid to Him; but we are ranſomed from his power by the ſuperior power of a Prince and a Saviour.

It is true, that *Chriſt* did ſuffer great Diſtreſs in gaining this god-like Power; yet not as an

(*k*) *Acts* x. 38. (*l*) *Heb.* ii. 14. (*m*) *Iſ.* xxv. 8.
(*n*) 1 *Cor.* xv. 57.

Offender;

Offender; but as a Prince who undertakes great difficulties and dangers to deliver his Country from Ruin; whom God makes uſe of as his Inſtrument to accompliſh his Will, (as he ſpeaks both of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Cyrus*;) and afterwards rewards, becauſe the Pleaſure of the Lord had proſpered in his hands. But he is not to be looked-upon, as if he were *ſmitten, ſtricken of God, and afflicted*; while employed in this dangerous and laborious ſervice: nor are the difficulties he goes through to be conſidered as vicarious Puniſhments, by which he ſaves them from the deſtruction they had deſerved: but as the voluntary Sufferings of a great and glorious Prince, for great and glorious Purpoſes. For he knew; that it was the deſign of God, that the world ſhould be inſtructed in righteouſneſs by him; and that he ſhould ſuffer death, in carrying-on that important work; and that God would reward his Sufferings in ſo good a cauſe, by raiſing him up to be a Prince and a Saviour.

We find in St. *John*'s Goſpel, that the *Meſſiah* is called the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World: but it is no where ſaid, that he did this as a *Victim* or *vicarious Sacrifice*. The alluſion ſeems to be made to the liii. chapter of *Iſaiah*; but the Lamb is not there conſidered as a Lamb to be ſacrificed; but as a Lamb to be ſheared; and where it goes-on to ſpeak of him as making his ſoul an offering for Sin, he is not con-

conſidered as a Lamb or a Victim; but as a Man acting voluntarily, and offering-up his Life. And though in the *Apocalypſe* he is ſpoken-of as the Lamb that was ſlain, in alluſion to the *Jewiſh* cuſtoms; he is not ever ſpoken-of as a *vicarious* Sacrifice: for they had *no* Sacrifices of that nature.

That the word *Sacrifice* is frequently uſed in a figurative ſenſe, merely by way of alluſion, both in the *old* and *new* Teſtament, is undeniable. For we find, that the *Sacrifice* of God is a troubled Spirit (*o*); and that he is pleaſed with a *Sacrifice* of Righteouſneſs (*p*); and in the *new* Teſtament we read of the *Sacrifice* of Praiſe (*q*), and of a ſpiritual *Sacrifice* (*r*); and our Bodies are ſaid to be a living *Sacrifice* (*s*); and the gifts ſent by St. *Paul* to the *Philippians* by *Epaphroditus* are called an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a *Sacrifice* well pleaſing to God: and to do good is called a *Sacrifice*, with which God is well pleaſed. And, where the *figurative* uſe of the word was ſo common, even when there was no Death; it would have been wonderful indeed, if it had not been ſometimes applied to the *Chriſtian Sacrifice*, where there was the *real* Death of *Chriſt*; who voluntarily gave up his Life to procure the good of Mankind.

(*o*) *Pſ.* xli. 16. (*p*) *Ib.* li. 19. (*q*) *Heb.* xiii. v. (*r*) I *Pet.* ii. v. (*s*) *Rev.* xii. 1. *Phil.* iv. 18.

It is not therefore at all ſurprizing; that St. *Paul*, who deals ſo much in figures, and alludes ſo continually to the *Jewiſh* cuſtoms; ſhould ſpeak of the death of *Chriſt*, as a *Sacrifice* or an Offering: and uſe the common *ſacrifical* terms, by way of figure; without ever ſuſpecting that the words would be taken literally(*t*)—But, on the contrary, if it be the true and literal ſenſe; it is impoſſible to account for it, how the Evangeliſts and the reſt of the ſacred writers ſhould never have mentioned it as ſuch; in a plain and intelligible manner: eſpecially, if it be a doctrine of ſuch Importance, and ſo eſſential to a true belief, as it has been repreſented by the Moderns. Whereas St. *Paul* himſelf ſpeaks of it in a very indeterminate manner; ſometimes, as a Peace-offering; ſometimes, as a Sin-offering; ſometimes, as our Paſſover; and ſometimes, as a Propitiation: All which expreſſions, when conſidered as Compariſons or Figures, are very

(*t*) Why ſhould we expect the Sacred Writers to be more critically exact in their expreſſions, than the Claſſic writers; who affected the utmoſt purity and elegance? And yet none of them would have ſcrupled to ſay, that *Codrus* ſacrificed himſelf for *Athens*; or that *Curtius* offered himſelf for *Rome*. *Juſtin* ſays of *Codrus*; Pro Salute Patriæ, morte ſe offerentis bello liberantur. And *Cicero* in his oration for *L. Flaccus*, towards the end, ſays; Quam poteſtis *P. Lentulo* mactare victrinam gratiorem quam ſi *L. Flaccus*, ſanguine illius nefarium in vos omnes odium Saturaveritis? Litemus igitur *Lentulo*.

juſt;

juſt; though inadequate: but, as all theſe Sacrifices do in ſome particulars differ from one another; it is impoſſible they ſhould be all true and exact, in the ſame *literal* ſenſe; much leſs in a ſenſe to which the *Moſaic* Law was a ſtranger; as when a *propitiatory* Sacrifice is explained in the heatheniſh ſenſe to mean a *vicarious* Sacrifice of Life for Life(*u*). For the Sacrifices among the *Jews* had no ſuch meaning; and conſequently, the word *Sacrifice* in the *new* Teſtament, which alludes to them, ought not to be ſo underſtood: as will farther appear from what follows—

1. That the Life of the Animal is never called in the *old* Teſtament a *Ranſom*; nor is there any ſuch expreſſion, as ἀντίλυτρον, ἀντίψυχον, λύτρον ἀντὶ ψυχῆς, Life for Life, Soul for Soul, equivalent Ranſom for Soul; or the like(*x*). Nor was the Atonement made, by the death of the Animal; as is generally imagined by the common people; but by the ſprinkling of the blood afterwards: for the Atonement was made by the Prieſt; but

(*u*) The whole nation of the *Gauls*, ſays *Cæſar* in his Commentaries; is much addicted to Superſtition: and therefore ſuch as are greatly afflicted with Diſtempers, or engaged in Battles and Dangers; either ſacrifice Men for Victims, or make a Vow that they will do ſo: becauſe they think the Divinity of the immortal Gods cannot otherwiſe be rendered propitious, than if the life of Man be given for the life of Man. *Cæſar*, Com. l. vi. c. 15.

(*x*) *Sykes* of *Sacrifices*, 135, 139.

the office of the Prieſt, who made the Atonement, did not begin, till after the Victim was ſlain by the perſon who brought it: and then the Prieſts, the ſons of *Aaron*, made the Atonement; by ſprinkling the Blood about the Altar, or by pouring it at the bottom of it(*y*). So that nothing *vicarious* can be proved, from the death of the Animal; as the Atonement did not conſiſt in it.

2. As the Words ἀντίλυτρον, &c. are not found in the *old* Teſtament; which certainly would be there, if the *Moſaic* Sacrifices were mean'd to be *vicarious:* ſo neither does the *Hebrew* word *Copher (pice obduxit)* the original of what is tranſlated the Propitiatory or Mercy Seat [ἱλαστήριον], convey any ſuch meaning: but ſignifies in general to *cover*; and from thence is uſed for Expiation, or Atonement, or the covering of Sin, in the ſenſe in which it is ſaid in *Pſ.* xxxi. and cited thence, *Rom.* iv. 7. Bleſſed are They, whoſe Sins are *covered*; bleſſed is the Man, to whom God will not impute Sin. According to which ſenſe, he that forgives, is himſelf the Propitiation; as *Chriſt* is called by St. *John*(*z*). So that nothing *vicarious* in the nature of the *Jewiſh* Sacrifices, can be urged from the Etymology of the word.

(*y*) *Levit.* vi. 7. See *Sykes* on *Sacrifices*, 23, 24, 180, 194, 203. and *Theophilus Gale*'s Court of the *Gentiles*.

(*z*) I *John* ii. 2. iv. 10.

3. Inſtead

3. Inſtead of the *Jewiſh* Atonements being *vicarious* Sacrifices of life for life, like thoſe of the *Druids*; it is notorious, that, according to the *Moſaic* Law, 1. No Atonements could be made, where Life was forfeited. 2. Atonements were made, where there was no Guilt; as for Places and Things, and natural Infirmities, and accidental Uncleanneſs. 3. Atonements were made, without the death of any Animal, or the ſhedding of Blood; as by an offering of flour, &c. and conſequently, theſe Sacrifices could not poſſibly be mean'd to be *vicarious*.

In truth, Sacrifices were at firſt deſigned as free-will Offerings and Gifts of the firſt-fruits of the Earth or Fold (*a*); and men offered up to

(*a*) *Gen.* iv. They are called Gifts, *Ex.* xxviii. 38. *Lev.* xxiii. 38. *Num.* xviii. 29, &c. and in the new Teſtament, *Luke* xxi. 1. *Heb.* vi. 1. viii. 4. ix. 9. xi. 4, &c. It was the opinion of *Bochart*, in a ſermon preached at *Caen*, Dec. 30. 1663, on *Gen.* iv. 3. *At the end of the days*; that by *days* was mean'd the *Year*, at the end of which, in *September*, *Cain* and *Abel* offered up their Sacrifices, 1. as commemorations of the Creation, which was in Autumn; 2. as thankful acknowledgements of God's bleſſing them with the fruits of the earth: anſwering to which the *Jews* had their feaſts of In-gathering, when we read of the joy of Harveſt; *Deut.* xiv. 22, 23. *Pſ.* iv. 7. The feaſt of Vintage, in *September*; the cuſtom of the Men of *Sichem* of ſacrificing and feaſting at the end of the Year; *Ju.* ix. 27. *Jer.* xli 1, 5, 8. And hence the *Bacchanalia*, &c. *Gale*'s Court of the *Gentiles*, part I. p. 270. Book ii. Chap. 9. p. 149.

God

God such things as were under their care, by way of Thankfulneſs for the increaſe of them; and not by way of Atonement for Sin. Accordingly, the Sacrifices of *Cain* and *Abel* are called *Minchas* or Gifts; and were taken from the fruits of the Ground and the firſtlings of the Flock.

The Origin of Sacrifices was the ſame; both among the *Jews* and *Pagans*. *Ariſtotle* tells us, that the ancient ſacrifices and aſſemblies to that end were after the gathering-in of the Fruits; for an oblation of the firſt fruits (*b*); and in *Rome* they taſted not of their new Corn or Wine, before the Prieſts had ſacrificed the firſt-fruits; according to the order of *Numa* (*c*): and the ſame was the Law of the XII Tables (*d*); and this is confirmed from the ancient cuſtom of offering in the firſt place ſome of the hair cut from the victim's forehead, which was called ἀπαρχαὶ, firſt fruits, and the action was expreſſed by ἀπάρχεσθαι, as in *Homer*——

——————————πολλὰ δ' Ἀθήνη
Εὐχεῖ' ἀπαρχόμενος κεφάλης τρίχας ἐν πυρὶ βάλλων. (*e*).

The ſame appears from tranſlating *Therumah* (*Offerings*) by the word ἀπαρχὰ, firſt fruits (*f*);

(*b*) *Ariſt. Eth.* l. viii. to the ſame purpoſe *Porphyrius* de abſtin. lib 2. S. 27. the Sacrifices were of firſt-fruits. See *Stillingfleet's Iren.* p. 77. (*c*) *Pliny*, xviii. cap. 2. (*d*) De Relig. tit. 1. lex. iv. (*e*) *Homer Odyſ.* γ. and *Iliad.* ξ. (*f*) *Exod.* xxv. 2, 3. LXX. tranſlation.

through

though it was an offering of gold and ſilver, and braſs, and purple, and ſcarlet, &c.(*g*). And this orignal meaning of Sacrifices, as gifts of the firſt-fruits, continued, for any thing we know to the contrary, till the days of *Abraham*. And ſuch Writers, as have fixed a narrower ſignification to the word *Sacrifice*, have only involved the ſubject in *Egyptian* Darkneſs; and fatally perplexed and expoſed to ſcorn and contempt the ſimpleſt and moſt rational inſtitution in the world.

Abraham is called, by *Cyril*, a lover of Sacrifices; but, of what nature his Sacrifices were, we are not certain. The Sacrifice mentioned in *Gen.* xv. was only in Viſion, as the Rabbins in *Pirke* R. *Eliezer* expound the whole chapter; and it appears from comparing the fifth and twelfth verſes: in the fifth, God brings *Abraham* into the field at the ſhutting up of the Evening; and ſhews him the Stars of Heaven: and in the 12th verſe it is yet Day, and the Sun is not gone down. In this viſion, *Abraham* enters into Covenant with God, according to the Ceremonies of the *Chaldæans*, among whom he was educated: upon which *Cyril* ſays; God, the great Governor of the Univerſe, condeſcends to the weakneſs of the good old Man; and ratified the Oath, according to the uſual Ceremonies of the *Chaldæans*. And this method of making

(*g*) See *Sykes* on *Sacrifices*.

and

and renewing Covenants afterwards continued in uſe, by the command of God (*b*); and was uſed upon no other Occaſions.

The ſacrificing *Iſaac* ſeems to be ſimilar to the offering of the firſt fruits; the ſon being the fruit of the body (*i*); only with this difference, that it was undertaken by the immediate Command of God: and this appears to be a Sacrifice the neareſt of any to the Sacrifice of *Chriſt*;

(*b*) *Limborch* ſays, in his diſpute with *Orobio*—It ſeems probable to Me, that Sacrifices were not commanded to *Cain* and *Abel*, and others who lived before the Law: for I meet with no ſigns of any ſuch command in the Scripture: But rather that they began from the firſt motion of pious Men, who knew by Reaſon that God was to be worſhipped; and that thanks ought to be given to him for his bleſſings, as to the ſupreme Benefactor; and believed that they ought to expreſs the grateful ſenſe of their minds by ſome external act; and that this would be beſt done, by conſecrating to God in a particular manner a part of the good things which he had given them; and deſtroying them in honour of God. *Amica Coll.* p. 609.

And *Orobio* ſays, in anſwer to *Limborch*—But theſe things are not ſo neceſſary to the obſervance of the Law of God; that it would be imperfect without them. This is ſo far from the truth; that the learned R. *Moſes Maimon* thought, that Sacrifices were not commanded by God; as being *neceſſary*: but becauſe the People, being accuſtomed to ſacrifice in *Egypt*, would go back to the religious rites of the *Gentiles*; if they were not prevented by a command to ſacrifice: therefore, &c. ibid. 210.

(*i*) The Prophet *Micah* preſerves this Similitude, when he ſays; ſhall I offer the fruit of my Body for the ſin of my Soul? *Micah* vi. 7.

being

being both of them acts of obedience to God, and undertaken by his Command: in both, the life was to be offered up to God as a free Gift; and without any offence committed by the offerer, from which he was to be purified; and there was no meat or drink offerings at either, to prove them to be expiatory; and no ſign of eating and drinking at God's Table; for neither God nor Man could be ſuppoſed to partake of ſuch a Sacrifice: and therefore the ſacrifice could not be conſidered as the *Bread* of God, nor the altar as the *Table* of God.

At the giving the *Moſaic* Law, the caſe was greatly altered from what it was before. Sacrifices of various kinds were inſtituted, and became the method of intercourſe between God and Man on every occaſion; in order to keep ſeparate the worſhip of the *Jew* and *Gentile*. For no one could partake of the Sacrifices of *Jehovah*, who was a worſhipper of the *Gentile* Gods; their rites and ceremonies being ſo oppoſite. Beſides this uſe, the ceremonial Law was a ſhadow of the moral Law; and the waſhings and purifications by blood and water and oil, had an analogy to the purifications of the mind; and the ſeveral ſorts of ſacrifices and purifications all ſerved in general to promote a religious Worſhip, and a pure and holy Life: and were appropriated, ſome to times of thankſgiving, others to prayer for bleſſings, or

forgiveneſs of ſin in general, or of particular ſins.—

But, if we conſider, what that *eſſential* Relation is; which was equally preſerved in *all* ſacrifices and oblations, and from whence alone we can form a judgement of the meaning of a Sacrifice in *general*; we can find no other than this—that it was a ſacred Gift(*k*) ſet apart to God, by which the Sacrificer ſhewed his readineſs to part with his property to religious uſes; and thereby openly and publickly(*l*) manifeſted his worſhip of that God, to whom the Sacrifice was made(*m*): for Sacrifices were never meaned as *private*, but as *public* acts of Worſhip. And if we conſider, what is meaned by Atonements and Propitiations; ſo as to take-in *all* Atonements on *every* Occaſion; we ſhall find them to have no other meaning and deſign, than to *purify* or *ſanctify*, or *ſet apart* any Perſon or Thing to the ſervice of God; by ſeparating them from com-

(*k*) *Corban* was a Gift to God *only*; *Mincha* ſignified a Gift *either* to God or Man.

(*l*) *Plato* lays it down as an inviolable Conſtitution; that no one have an Altar in his own private houſe. *de Leg.* lib. 10. See *Herod.* of the Perſian Cuſtoms *Cl.*

(*m*) Mr. *Pyle* on *Levit.* i. 4. ſays; This free burnt-offering was made in Acknowledgement of the Sovereignty, Power and Providence of God; in Teſtimony of his (the Sacrificer's) owning him as his only Lord, and continuing in Covenant with him and imploring his bleſſing.

mon

mon uſe (*n*): for it is only in this ſenſe that Atonements can be underſtood to relate to *Things* and *Places*, as well as *Perſons*; to the guiltleſs, as well as the guilty; and to be made by water or oil, or a ſacrifice of flour, or touching the altar, as well as by the death of a Victim.

By theſe methods the ſacrificers were purified by the *Moſaic* law, *as to the fleſh*; for this was all, that any ſacrifices could do; the blood of bulls and of goats could reach no farther than the expiation of *legal* Uncleanneſs (*o*); and they approached to God with pure Hands, to ſignify the purity of the Heart; and as blood was looked upon among the *Jews* with the greateſt reverence, it was always made uſe of as a purification; when any animal was ſlain in ſacrifice. But ſuch ſacrifices were not looked-upon as more compleat, than when *no* blood was ſhed; as in the offering of Flour, or of the Scape goat, [which is called a Sin-offering, and was preſented alive before the Lord (*p*);] or when the Atonement was made, without either death or offering, by touching the Altar. From all which it appears, that the Atonement, according to the *Moſaic*

(*n*) *Gen.* ii. 3. When God ſanctified the ſeventh day, it was by ſetting it apart for *religious* uſes. So Perſons were *ſanctified*, *Exod.* xix. 10. and Houſes, *Lev.* xxvii. 14. and Fields. ver. 16. and the Altar, *Ex.* xxix. 36, 37. and the People by touching it.

(*o*) *Heb.* ix. 13. (*p*) *Lev.* xvi. 5. 10.

law, became ſuch; becauſe it was received as ſuch by God, and not from any value in the offering itſelf, or any thing *vicarious* in the nature of it. And from hence we may obſerve; that the *Chriſtians*, when they ſpeak of the infinite Value of the blood of *Chriſt*, miſtake the very nature of the *Moſaic* atonements; in which the intrinſic value of the Sacrifice was intirely out of the queſtion. The word *Atonement*, or any others ſuppoſed to be equivalent to it, are ſo ſeldom uſed in the *new* Teſtament; as plainly ſhews them to be mere alluſions to the *Jewiſh* Cuſtoms; like many other things, to which *Chriſt* and the death of *Chriſt* are compared: but by no means capable of a *literal* meaning, even in the *Moſaic* ſenſe of the word; and much leſs ſo, in the ſenſe of a *vicarious* ſacrifice.

Indeed, it is impoſſible; that any of theſe expreſſions ſhould be underſtood in any other than a *figurative* ſenſe: becauſe, when *Chriſt* came into the World, to gather together both *Jews* and *Gentiles* under one head; and conſequently, to put an end to the Law of Ceremonies, which ſeparated them, and which the whole world could not poſſibly comply with; all *Atonement* appointed by the *Moſaic* Law naturally and neceſſarily *ceaſed*. But as it was not fit, that any of the benefits ſhould therefore ceaſe, which had ever been received by them; but it was ſtill proper, that the worſhippers of God ſhould be

purified

purified and *ſanctified*, and fit for the ſervice of God, as they were before; all theſe Requiſites, and all theſe Advantages we received by the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation, are ſpoken-of in the *Chriſtian* Church (but moſt certainly in a figurative *ſenſe*) in the ſame *words* as they were ſpoken-of in the *Jewiſh* Church. And *Chriſt*, who has conferred them upon us, is ſpoken-of in the language of the *Jewiſh* Law, (which had now ceaſed to be of force,) as the High-Prieſt, and the Victim: and the Propitiation [or Atonement], (*q*) and the ſacrifice of every kind, our Sin-

(*q*) 1. The Word καταλλαγὴ, which is tranſlated *Atonement*, *Rom.* v. 11. ought to have been tranſlated *Reconciliation*; as the verb and participle are uſed in the foregoing verſe. And it is obſervable; that, whatever mention is made of Reconciliation to God in the new Teſtament, it refers to reconciling the heathen World, or ſuch as had ceaſed to be the people of God, to God, and making them the people of God, and granting them the privileges of his Kingdom. *Sykes*, of Redemp. p. 56. 201.

We are reconciled to God; by the Knowledge of his Righteouſneſs and Love to Mankind, in giving us Remiſſion of ſins paſſed through his forbearance: and giving up his Son *Jeſus Chriſt* to death for us all: as the faithful Witneſs to the Doctrine which he preached. Thus we are reconciled by his Death, or by Faith in his Blood—And, as he received power to give eternal Life, we are ſaved by his Life. Whereas, if this Reconciliation [καταλλαγὴ] was an Atonement or Expiation in a literal ſenſe; there could be no ſuch diſtinction made by the Apoſtle: but *Salvation* would have been wrought by the death of *Chriſt*, as well

as

Sin-offering(*r*) and Peace-offering, and Paſſover and Sanctification, and Righteouſneſs: [ſee the caſe

as the *Reconciliation*. But the Apoſtle ſpeaks here preciſely; If, when we were Enemies, we were *reconciled* to God by the *Death* of his ſon; much more, being *reconciled*, we ſhall be *ſaved* by his *Life*. *Rom.* v. 10.

2. The word ἱλαστήριον, which is falſely tranſlated *Propitiation*, *Rom.* iii. 25. ſignifies the *Mercy-ſeat* See *Joſ. Mede* on God's Houſe. *Taylor* on the *Romans*, 268. *Sykes* on Sacrifices, 152. and on Redemption, 192. The *Mercy-ſeat* is deſcribed, *Exod.* xxv. 17—22. This was the place, from whence the commands of God were given out to the *Jews*; by *Chriſt*, the *Jehovah Angel*. See *Deut.* viii. 89. But, ſince *Chriſt* is made the Salvation of God to the ends of the earth; (*Iſ.* xlix. 6.) he is become the *Mercy-ſeat* to the *Gentiles*; as well as to the *Jews*. God hath ſet him forth, ſays the Apoſtle, *Rom.* iii. 25. to be a *Mercy-ſeat* through Faith in his blood, *to declare his Righteouſneſs for the Remiſſion of Sins, that are paſſed through the forbearance of God.* Here we ſee, that *Chriſt* is called the *Mercy-ſeat*; from the very nature of his office: which was to declare the Righteouſneſs of God for the remiſſion of ſins paſſed through his forbearance.

(*r*) And upon this account, becauſe we receive from him Remiſſion of Sins, which was the effect of the Sin-offerings, with regard to legal uncleanneſs, and the purifying of the fleſh; he is called by St. *John* ἱλασμὸς· which properly ſignifies a *Sin-offering*, and is tranſlated a *Propitiation*. The Word is uſed in the New Teſtament but *twice*; once in *Rom.* v. 11. where it ought to have been tranſlated *Reconciliation*, as I obſerved; and once in I *Jo.* ii. 2, where it ſignifies a *Sin-offering*.

But the death of *Chriſt* was of a nature, infinitely ſuperior to any thing of that kind; as I ſhall preſently prove:

caſe of *Phineas* making an atonement; *Num.* xxv. 13. ἐξιλασατο περι των υιων.] And we are ſaid to be purified by the waſhing of water by the Word; ſometimes by the waſhing of Regeneration; ſometimes our hearts are ſaid to be ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience; which muſt in its very nature be a Sanctification, without any other Atonement: at other times, when the *Chriſtian* Religion is conſidered as a Covenant, we are ſaid to be ſanctified by the blood of the Covenant; and, when it is conſidered as a doctrine to be believed and practiſed, we are ſaid to be ſanctified by the word of Truth:

prove: and muſt be therefore underſtood in the ſame ſenſe, as when *Chriſt* is ſaid by *Iſaiah* to become the Salvation of God. He was not the Cauſe, that influenced God to ſave; for that was his own Benevolence and Love to the World: but the Means, by which he ſaved: that is, the very *efficient* Cauſe or Saviour. He did not *make* God *propitious*; but God ſent him to become a *Propitiation*, in the ſenſe of a Saviour; and he ſaved, by forgiving Sin. He did not reconcile God to the World; but he reconciled the World (that is, the *Gentile* World) to God. And by forgiving their Sins, upon their Repentance and entering into the Church of God; he is ſaid ἱλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας· to appeaſe Sin; or to take away the ſting or poiſonous quality or bad effects of Sin. Thus the phraſe is uſed, *Eccluſ.* iii. 3. whoſo honoureth his Father, maketh atonement for his Sins. So *Eccluſ.* xx. 28. and xxviii. 5. All theſe expreſſions are only figurative and partial repreſentations of that great Truth; that *Chriſt* is conſtituted the Salvation of God, to give Repentance and Forgiveneſs. *Rom.* iii. 25. *Acts* v. 31.

and,

and, when the Perſons are conſidered, by, or from whom we receive the Doctrine; we are ſaid to be ſanctified by the Father, or by the Holy Ghoſt, or by *Chriſt*, who of God is ſaid to be made unto us Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs and Sanctification and Redemption. Whereas in the preciſe literal ſenſe they are ſanctified only by *Chriſt* himſelf, or by the Father through him, by the forgiveneſs of Sins; all other Cauſes by which they are ſaid to be ſanctified, are alluſions to the *Moſaic* Ceremonies; or relate to the particular Method, by which our Sanctification is gained; or to ſome more diſtant Cauſes, *ſine qua non*, which were neceſſary to compleat it.

But though the offering up to the ſervice of God the whole Employment of his Life, and even Life itſelf, was a Sacrifice (in the original ſenſe of the Word), or a ſacred Gift; and a Satisfaction well pleaſing to God (*s*); and was rewarded

(*s*) Hoſtias & Victimas Domino offeram, quas in uſum mei protulit; ut rejiciam ei ſuum munus? ingratum eſt: cum ſit litabilis Hoſtia bonus animus & pura mens & ſincera conſcientia. Igitur qui innocentiam colit, Domino ſupplicat; qui juſtitiam, Deo libat; qui fraudibus abſtinet, *propitiat* Deum; qui hominem periculo ſurripit, opimam victimam cædit: Hæc noſtra ſacrificia, hæc Dei ſacra ſunt; ſic apud nos religioſior eſt ille qui juſtior. *Min. Felicis Oct.* See *Perſius* Sat. ii. l. 72. Quin damus id Superis, de magna quod dare lance Non potuit magni *Meſſalæ* lippa propago; Compoſitum jus faſque animi, ſanctos que receſſus Mentis, & incoctum generoſo pectus honeſto—This figu-

warded with great Bleſſings, as was the intended Sacrifice of *Iſaac*; yet was it by no means a Sin-offering, in the ſenſe of the *Moſaic* Sin-offering; for the following Reaſons—1. becauſe he was ſent into the world with the gracious meſſage of Pardon and Forgiveneſs to all ſuch as would receive him; which Commiſſion he executed before his Death: whereas, in the *Moſaic* Sacrifices, the Sacrifice was made before the Forgiveneſs.

2. It is true, that the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* labours to ſhew a ſimilarity between the *Moſaic* and the *Chriſtian* Sacrifices; which no doubt there was; and, to make-out the analogy, uſes very hard *figures:* as when he compares the ſprinkling the blood of the victim, to the ſprinkling our hearts from an evil conſcience; and the Tabernacle to the body of *Chriſt*, and the fleſh of *Chriſt* to the Veil which opened the way into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*; and calls it a new and a living way, and conſiders *Chriſt* both as the High-Prieſt and Victim. But, were the analogy ever ſo exact, it would not make the expreſſions *literal:* and in many particulars there is no manner of likeneſs between them. For in the Sacrifice of *Chriſt* there was no ſalting with ſalt, no impoſition of hands, no blood ſprinkled by the prieſt, in which conſiſted the atonement;

figurative expreſſion being ſo natural, it is the greater wonder that any one ſhould think of fixing a *literal* ſenſe upon it.

for the atonement was not made by the death of the victim, but by the ſprinkling of the blood; as I have already obſerved; Man the offender did not offer him to God; nor begged forgiveneſs of his Sins: all which things were cuſtomary, and moſt if not all of them neceſſary, in a *Moſaic* expiatory Sacrifice (*t*) of a Victim. But this was not the Caſe with *Chriſt*. He was crucified and ſlain, as a common Malefactor.

If it be ſaid; that *Chriſt* was the Sacrificer, and he offered himſelf up to God; it ſhould be conſidered, that the Sacrifices of the *Moſaic* Law were offered to gain forgiveneſs to the Perſon who ſacrificed; but this could not be true of *Chriſt*, for he had no Sin to be forgiven.

If it be ſaid; that he ſacrificed, as a Prieſt, to gain forgiveneſs for *others*; it ſhould be obſerved, that, according to the *Moſaic* Law, he was incapable of ſuch an office: for the Law requires, that the Prieſts ſhould be of the Tribe of *Levi*; or the family of *Aaron*. "But He [*Chriſt*], of whom theſe things are ſpoken, pertaineth to another Tribe; of which no man gave attendance at the Altar. For it is evident, that our Lord ſprang out of *Judah*; of which tribe *Moſes* ſpake nothing concerning the Prieſt-hood(*u*)." And therefore St. *Paul*, who was aware of this objection; when he ſpeaks of *Chriſt* as a Prieſt, tells us; that he was a

(*t*) See *Sykes* on Sacrifices. (*u*) *Heb.* vii. 13, 14.

Prieſt

Prieſt of a ſuperior Order to the *Aaronical* Prieſthood, being a Prieſt for ever after the order of *Melchiſedek*(*x*)." This is a plain conceſſion; that, according to the *Moſaic* Law, *Chriſt* was incapable as a Prieſt to offer any ſacrifice. But, ſuppoſing he had been of the Tribe of *Levi*, the caſe would have been juſt the ſame; with regard to all Mankind, except the *Jews*: for the *Jewiſh* ſacrifices did not extend beyond the Circumciſion. The Sacrifice of *Chriſt* could not therefore be a propitiatory ſacrifice, according to the *Moſaic* Law; and much leſs a Propitiation for the Sins of the *whole* World(*y*). And, beſides all this, we muſt conſider what St. *Paul* ſays at the 4th verſe; that *Chriſt* could not offer himſelf to God for us, till he was conſtituted our High-Prieſt; and that was not before his Aſcenſion into Heaven. For, if he were on Earth, he ſhould not be a Prieſt: thoſe being Prieſts, who offer gifts according to the Law(*z*). He could not therefore, properly and literally ſpeaking, offer any ſacrifice to God, whilſt he was here on earth, according to the Law of *Moſes*; becauſe he was not a Prieſt according to the Law(*a*).

If it was therefore a literal offering or ſacrifice made by *Chriſt* as a Prieſt; it was of a

(*x*) Ver. 17. (*y*) I *John* ii. 2. iv. 10. (*z*) *Heb.* viii. 4. (*a*) See *Sykes*, 284.

higher nature, and of a prior and ſuperior diſpenſation to the *Moſaic*; ſuch as was offered in the days of *Melchiſedek*, the Prieſt of the moſt high God. But we have no reaſon to think, that any offerings before the Law were mean'd to be expiatory; but all of them euchariſtical(*b*).

But farther, the Sacrifices of the *Moſaic* Law ſanctified only to the purifying of the Fleſh(*c*); and procured no Forgiveneſs for *moral* Turpitude; but only for *legal* Uncleanneſs. But the ſacrifice of *Chriſt* had ſomething in it of a nature greatly ſuperior; and in its conſequences not only *took away all Sin*, from thoſe who

(*b*) We do not find, that the ſacrifices were eaten by *Cain* and *Abel*; though Dr. *Sykes* ſuppoſes it, in p. 167; and aſſumes it as certain, in p. 179. But, if they had eaten it, it would not prove the notion of eating and drinking at God's Table, as a ſign of being reinſtated in Friendſhip with him, to be ſo early—*Iſaac* certainly was not intended as a ſacrifice to be eaten; and we are not told of any meat or drink offering, which *Abraham* had prepared at that time. Nor does it follow, from *Jacob*'s calling his brethren to eat bread. For it was natural to invite their Friends to partake in the ſolemnity of the Sacrifice, and afterwards entertain them; without any ſuch notion. Nay, the Entertainment itſelf might be looked-upon as a ſacred thing; and yet be no part of the Sacrifice; nor a meat or drink-offering: much leſs that they conſidered themſelves as eating and drinking at God's Table; which, as I apprehend, was a notion introduced long after.

(*c*) *Heb.* ix. 13.

received

received his Laws; but gained for them *eternal Life:* for it was not a performance of mere Rites and Ceremonies; but a life of perfect Righteouſneſs. And in this ſenſe I underſtand St. *Paul*, when he conſiders it as ſuperior to thoſe literal Sacrifices; His argument is this—when *Chriſt* cometh into the world, he ſaith, Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldeſt not; but a body haſt thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and ſacrifices for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure; then ſaid I, lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God(*d*)—He taketh away the *firſt*, [that is, burnt-offerings and ſacrifice, and offerings for Sin, which he ſays were offered by the Law, verſe 8.] that he may eſtabliſh the *ſecond*; [viz. the doing the will of God.] Now I argue—

If ſacrifices for ſin are actually taken-away by *Chriſt*; then an actual and literal ſacrifice for ſin does not come in the place of them: for God cannot be ſuppoſed to take-away the *firſt*, in order to eſtabliſh the *ſecond*; if the *ſecond* was the ſame as the firſt. So that the offering the Body of *Chriſt*(*e*) cannot be here conſidered, as a legal ſacrifice, or any thing of that nature; except merely in a figurative ſenſe: for the Merit of *Chriſt*'s ſufferings conſiſted in his

(*d*) *Heb.* x. 5, &c. (*e*) *Heb.* x. 10.

Obe-

Obedience; and in Reward of that Obedience he received the power to ſave.

And it is no objection to this; that what *Chriſt* did and ſuffered continues to be called a Sacrifice for ſins, at the 12th verſe. For it is a common figure, as Mr. *Souverain* obſerves; that the name, the qualities, and even the perſonality, of the thing that ceaſeth to be, or is rejected, is given to that which takes its place; though it be of a different Nature. God, rejecting Sacrifices, gives the name of Sacrifice to the Obedience which he accepts(*f*). To the ſame purpoſe the Apoſtle argues in the ninth chapter to the *Hebrews*. If the blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the aſhes of a Heifer, ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the Fleſh; as it did, in the *Moſaic* Law: how much more ſhall the blood of *Chriſt*, who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your Conſciences

(*f*) *Le Platoniſme devoilé*; part. 1. ch. 18. There is nothing more natural, ſays Dr. *Allix*; than to give to a thing, which ſupplies the place of another, and *which procures all the fruits of it*, the name of that, inſtead whereof it is ſubſtituted. St. *Paul* obſerved this rule in his Epiſt. to the *Heb.* If he gave the name of Sacrifice to the Obedience of *Jeſus Chriſt*, it was to ſuit his Expreſſions to the Ideas, which prevailed under the ancient Diſpenſation; wherein the principal acts of Piety conſiſted in Sacrifice: he applied theſe ancient Sacrifices to the death of *Chriſt*; without intending any other Myſtery in it.

from

from dead works to ſerve the living God! That is, if the blood of bulls and goats cleanſed from all *legal* turpitude; how much more ſhall the death of *Chriſt*, under the guidance of the eternal Spirit, which was the higheſt act of Obedience to the will of God, cleanſe us from all *moral* turpitude; and prevail with us to avoid all ſin and wickedneſs for the future, and be reconciled to God! "Thoſe Offerings, as Mr. *Cruden* has obſerved in his Concordance, though they *repreſented* Grace and Purity; did not *communicate* them: though they convinced the ſinner of the neceſſity incumbent on him to purify himſelf and make ſatisfaction to God; they did not impart *Innocence* to him." But, though it was beyond the power and nature of the *Moſaic* ſacrifices to cleanſe from moral evil and the conſequences of it; yet it was not beyond the power of the *Chriſtian* ſacrifice, conſidered figuratively as a ſacrifice of Righteouſneſs(g), to gain the power of forgiving.

The ſacrifice of *Chriſt* had therefore the neareſt reſemblance of any to the ſacrifice of *Abraham*, when he was about to offer up his ſon. It was an act of Righteouſneſs, in Obedience to the will of God, as *his* was; and the Effect of both was of the ſame nature: for as *Abraham* by this act

(g) See the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe on *Pſ.* iv. 5. where it is ſaid, Subdue your Luſts; and it ſhall be counted to you a ſacrifice of Juſtice or Righteouſneſs. *Pſ.* li. 19. *Deut.* xxxiii. 19. *Pſ.* iv. 5. Offer ſacrifices of Righteouſneſs; and put your Truſt in the Lord.

of

of Obedience gained great bleſſings upon *his own* family; ſo hath *Jeſus Chriſt*, by becoming the Son of Man, that is, by a Life and Death of Obedience, gained the power of beſtowing bleſſings upon *all* the families of the earth. And the extraordinary power and effect of Righteouſneſs above Sacrifice, is very plainly revealed in many parts of the old Teſtament. I deſired Mercy, and not Sacrifice, ſays the Prophet *Hoſea*; and the Knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings(*b*). The prophet *Samuel* ſays; Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and ſacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? behold, to obey is better than ſacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams(*i*). *Miçah* declares the ſame thing very ſtrongly; Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf before the moſt high God? ſhall I come before him with burnt-offerings; with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams; or ten thouſands of rivers of oil? ſhall I give my firſt-born, for my Tranſgreſſion; the fruit of my Body, for the ſin of my Soul? He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee; but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God(*k*)? *Jeremiah* ſays expreſly; I ſpake not unto your fathers, nor commanded

(*b*) *Hoſ.* vi. 6. (*i*) I *Sam.* xv. 22. (*k*) *Micah* vi. 6.

them,

them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of *Egypt*, concerning burnt offerings and ſacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, ſaying; Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and Ye ſhall be my People(*l*). And this ſuperiority of Righteouſneſs to Sacrifice was plainly intimated, in the command

(*l*) *Jer.* vi. 22, 23. And ſeveral Learned Men underſtand, that Sacrifices were not originally commanded by God. The ever-memorable *John Hales* of *Eaton* ſays; I confeſs, the ſervice of God had evermore ſome ceremony attending it; which to our Fathers before *Chriſt* may ſeem to have been neceſſary, becauſe God commanded it: but let us not deceive ourſelves; for *neither was Sacrifice then, neither is Ceremony now*, eſteemed neceſſary; neither ever was the Command of God concerning it taken to be peremptory, by thoſe to whom it was given.—St. *Chryſoſtom* on the tenth of the *Hebrews*, denies that God ever from the beginning required, or that it was his Will to ordain, ſuch an outward form of Worſhip. And aſking therefore, πῶς δὲ ἐνέτειλε; how then ſeems he to have commanded it? he anſwers, συγκαταβαίνων· by condeſcending only, and by ſubmitting himſelf to human Infirmity. Now this συγκατάβασις, this Condeſcending of God, wherein it conſiſted *Oecumenius* opens: for becauſe that men had a conceit, that it was convenient to offer up ſome part of their ſubſtance unto God; and ſo ſtrongly were they poſſeſſed of this conceit, that if they offered it not up unto Him, they would offer it up to Idols; God, ſaith he, rather than they ſhould offer unto Idols, required them to offer unto Him. And thus was God underſtood by the holy men themſelves, &c. *Hales'* ſermon on *Luke* xviii. 1. p. 204, of his Remains. Is it then poſſible, that Chriſtianity ſhould be builded upon ſuch a foundation?

that was given to *Moſes*, and repreſented by an outward Symbol(*m*); Thou ſhalt make a plate of pure Gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a ſignet, Holineſs to *Jehovah*; and it ſhall be upon *Aaron*'s forehead, that he may bear, or take-away the Iniquity of the holy things, which the children of *Iſrael* ſhall hallow in all their Gifts: and it ſhall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord. Here we ſee, that it was *Holineſs*, conſidered *as Holineſs*, and not as any particular act of ſacrifice or death, that was to take-away the ſins of the holy things; and make-up for the defects of their holy Gifts, or Sacrifices.

But farther, if we conſider the death of *Chriſt* merely in the ſenſe of a *Moſaic* Sacrifice for ſin, or even as a *vicarious* Suffering of one perſon inſtead of another; the utmoſt advantage that can poſſibly be gained by it, can be no more than the forgiveneſs of Sin, and a freedom from Puniſhment; (as I have obſerved of a literal Ranſom:) which is a moſt unworthy Notion of the Sacrifice of Righteouſneſs which he made, and for which he was rewarded with Power, not only to forgive ſin, but to raiſe the dead, and judge the world in Righteouſneſs, and to give eternal Life to as many as he will. Theſe are Bleſſings, which extend far beyond the nature of a *Moſaic* or a *vicarious* Sacrifice;

(*m*) *Ex.* xxviii. 36.

and

and cannot be accounted-for upon any ſuch principle.

From all theſe conſiderations it ſeems to appear; that we have no reaſon to believe, that what *Chriſt did* and *ſuffered*, does *exactly* and *literally* anſwer to an expiatory Sacrifice; rather than to any other image to which it is compared. For the very variety of compariſons is a proof, that it does not reſemble any of them throughout: and indeed it was of ſuch a nature, and had ſuch extraordinary effects; that nothing, which ever before happened, can fully expreſs it. And therefore ſuch alluſions, or metaphyſical expreſſions taken from the *Jewiſh* cuſtoms, ſhould not be expected to correſpond in every *particular*: it is ſufficient to ſee the *general* import and meaning of them.

But what fully proves, that theſe different expreſſions cannot be taken in an exact and literal ſenſe; is this—that, if any one of them be literal, not one of the reſt can be ſo. For, 1. if the Suffering of *Chriſt* be the literal Payment of a debt; and he pays our debt for us, which God was not ſo merciful as to forgive; then his Death is not literally a Ranſom from our Captivity to ſin and death, nor a vicarious Puniſhment, nor a propitiatory ſacrifice; nor is the debt forgiven *freely* by God, but only transferred from one Perſon to another, to pay it for us; ſo that what we once owed to *God*, we now

owe to *Chriſt*; and, if that be the caſe, the debt ſtill remains: unleſs we will venture to ſay, that *Chriſt* will forgive, where God the Father will inſiſt upon a recompenſe and payment.

2. If it be a literal Ranſom from captivity; it is no literal Payment of a debt, but a price paid for the liberty of the captive; nor is it a Puniſhment, nor a Sacrifice, nor is our delivery *gratuitous* [δωρεάν].

3. If it be a literal Puniſhment; it is neither the Payment of a debt, nor a Ranſom, nor a Sacrifice, nor are our Sins forgiven us *at all*.

4. If it be a literal Sacrifice, according to the *Moſaic* Law; it is neither the Payment of a debt nor a Ranſom, nor a Puniſhment, nor can it be a Sacrifice of different kinds at once, in a *literal* ſenſe; but it muſt be a Sin-offering, or a Peace-offering, or a Paſſover, &c. and, if it anſwers to any one of theſe, it can anſwer to none of the reſt.

5. Laſtly, if our Sins are forgiven *freely* [δωρεάν]; there can be no literal Payment of a debt, no literal Ranſom, no Puniſhment ſuffered, and no Victim ſlain: for, where a Sacrifice was offered, the Forgiveneſs was never conſidered to be gratuitous [δωρεάν].

The only ſenſe, in which all theſe things are conſiſtent, is this; that we are forgiven [δωρεὰν] *freely*, (that is, the Gift itſelf is *free*, and ariſes merely from the Love of God to the World) but

but the Power of conferring this Happineſs upon Mankind, was gained by a life and death of Righteouſneſs and Obedience, and *Chriſt* received it as a Reward; and God forgave us by Him, to the end that we might love, and reverence, and honour his Son, even as we honour the Father: and be influenced, from the conſideration of what he has ſuffered for our ſakes, to obey his commands; and become partakers with him in the Kingdom which he has purchaſed for all his obedient Subjects(*n*).

Chriſt therefore was not literally a *Ranſom*; but he *received power* to *ranſom* or deliver from Sin and Death: he did not *pay* the debt; but he *received power to forgive* it: he was not *puniſhed*; but he *ſuffered*, and thereby *gained power* to *remit* the Puniſhment: his death was not an Atonement, in the ſenſe of that which *influences* God to ſave; but as the *means* by which God ſaves: and he did not reconcile God to the

(*n*) Forgiveneſs does not follow the Sacrifice of *Chriſt*, ex opere operato, as the School Phraſe is; but from the Voluntary Exerciſe of his Power to forgive. If it follow'd ex opere operato, and his blood was eſtimated at its Value, which, as St. *Auguſtine* ſays, on the xcv. *Pſ.* was of no leſs Value than the whole World; the conſequence would be the Salvation of the Wicked as well as the Righteous. We are told alſo, that *Chriſt* gives eternal Life to as many as he will: But if his Sacrifice acted as an opus operatum, *Will* could be of no account; nor Faith, nor Works, nor any other Condition.

World,

World, for God never was at Enmity with it; [for he loved the World] but he reconciled the World to God, by gaining it over to the worſhip of God, and the practice of Righteouſneſs. And in this ſenſe all theſe figurative expreſſions will be conſiſtent; and *Chriſt* may be ſaid to be a Ranſom, and a Sacrifice, and an Atonement, and yet our Sins to be forgiven *freely*, without the Payment of any equivalent, or ſatisfaction for it.

§ 5. Several other expreſſions and phraſes in Scripture, alluding to the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies, are preſſed into the ſervice of *vicarious* Puniſhment; which it may be proper to mention here. The Prophet *Iſaiah* ſays; He hath *borne* our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows (*o*); which ſome *Chriſtians* interpret to mean, that *Our* ſins were imputed to *Him*; and he was *charged* with them, and *puniſhed* for them: but the LXX interpret the Words thus; *He bare our Sins, and was grieved about us:* and St. *Matthew* interprets them of his curing the ſick and weak; for having ſaid, *he healed thoſe that were ſick*, he adds; that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by *Iſaias* the Prophet, ſaying; He took our Infirmities, and bare our Sickneſſes (*p*). Now if the *taking* our Infirmities and *bearing* our Sickneſſes does not mean the *ſuffering* our infirmities and ſickneſſes in Himſelf, but only the *bearing them*

(*o*) *Iſ.* liii. 4. (*p*) *Mat.* viii. 17.

away

away or *removing* them from Us; then the bearing our Iniquities may alſo be underſtood to ſignify no more, than the removing away from us our ſins and iniquities by forgiveneſs(*q*).

Our Fathers were certainly much miſtaken, and ſo the Prophet tells them; when they eſteemed *him* to be ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted: and ſome of the *Chriſtans* are now in the ſame Error; who conſider him as puniſhed by God and ſuffering, in order to vindicate his Laws: but this could not be; becauſe he is declared to be without Spot or Blemiſh, even at the very time that he ſuffered, the juſt for the unjuſt (*r*); and, conſequently, he had no Sins to *anſwer-for*; or *bear*, in *that* ſenſe. And beſides it is abſurd to ſuppoſe; that he could ſuffer for the Sins of Men, as a *guilty* Perſon; becauſe he came down from Heaven, with an ample power to forgive them, and did forgive the Sins of many, even before his death. And, conſequently, when it is ſaid, that *he* bare our ſins and *our* ſins were laid upon *him* (*s*); it muſt be underſtood in the ſame ſenſe, as when the Apoſtle directs us to caſt all our Care upon

(*q*) *Levit.* xvi.

(*r*) Without Spot, *Heb.* ix. 11. Juſt for the unjuſt; I *Pet.* i. 19.

(*s*) *Chriſt* was once offered to bear the Sins of many. *Heb.* ix. 28.—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. *Iſ.* liii. 6.—He ſhall bear their Iniquities, ver. 11.

God

God (*t*); or, when the Pſalmiſt ſays, Caſt thy Burthen upon the Lord, and He ſhall ſuſtain thee (*u*): Where it does not mean, that God ſhall be made anxious with *our* Cares, and feel the weight of *our* Burthens; but merely, that he ſhall take them away from us. And thus the word is underſtood, in many places in Scripture(*x*).

The *Chriſtians* ſeem by theſe interpretations to confound themſelves; by putting forced and unnatural meanings upon phraſes, which in common uſe every body underſtands in a popular ſenſe. For, univerſally, when a Lord or Maſter is ſaid to take upon himſelf the fault or error of his Servant; it has no other meaning than this, that he excuſes or forgives it; or, if the fault be committed againſt a third Perſon, that he will take care the ſervant ſhall not ſuffer for it: but to carry the letter ſo far, as to ſuppoſe that the Lord himſelf will ſuffer the Puniſhment due to the Servant; is carrying the

(*t*) I *Pet.* v. 7. (*u*) *Pſ.* lv. 22.

(*x*) Dr. *Sykes* obſerves; the words of *Iſaiah* [liii. 6.] in the Original ſignify; the Lord hath made to meet in Him the iniquities of us all: that is, that in Him contempt, pains, want and even ignominious public death fell to his Lot: or, that he came into the World to ſuffer all theſe. What we render *Iniquity*, is in the original [*Eth Avon*] *the Iniquity*; or, the treatment of Iniquity. He was treated, as if he had been a great ſinner; as if he had been appointed to bear the ſufferings of us all. p. 75.

words

words to an extravagant ſenſe, in which ſuch expreſſions are never intended to be underſtood; and eſpecially, if the fault be committed againſt the Lord or Maſter, the notion of puniſhing *himſelf* for a fault committed againſt *himſelf*, is abſurd beyond all conception.

1. In ſhort, if the Guilt of our Sins was not literally *laid* on *Chriſt*, he could not in Juſtice be *literally* puniſhed for them; becauſe there can be no juſt Puniſhment, but where there is Guilt.

2. As the whole weight of Sin conſiſts in the *conſciouſneſs* of it; *Chriſt* could not bear the weight of *our* ſin, becauſe he could not be conſcious of what he was not guilty of.

3. If the Guilt of *our* ſins was literally *laid* upon *him*; then he was conſidered as guilty of them: and, conſequently, he could not be without Spot. But the Scripture declares him to be without Spot; and there is no Spot, in a *moral* ſenſe, but Guilt.

4. If *our* ſins are ſuppoſed to have been laid upon *Chriſt*, in the ſenſe in which the ſins of the People were laid upon the Scape-Goat; (which was only ſymbolical; for the Goat could not be literally guilty of them:) then, he could not be a literal and a legal Sacrifice: for the Scape-Goat was ſo unclean and unfit for Sacrifice, upon this very account; becauſe he bare the ſins of the people, though only in a figurative and ſym-

bolical ſenſe; that the perſon who let him go was commanded to waſh his Cloaths and bathe his Fleſh in water, before he returned to the camp (*y*): and the Goat was called rejectaneous, or refuſe(*z*). Nothing can therefore be more abſurd, and contrary to the genius of the *Moſaic* Law, than to believe; that *Chriſt* was both an expiatory Sacrifice, and yet that he bare our Iniquities either in a literal or ſymbolical ſenſe; for they are abſolutely inconſiſtent with each other.

5. In a word, there is no more reaſon to imagine, when *Chriſt* ſacrificed his Life for the good of *Man*, that he did it to appeaſe the wrath of *God*; than there is to imagine this to have been the Intent of our Father *Abraham*, when he drew his knife to ſlay his Son. 'Tis a contradiction to the whole Syſtem of *Chriſtianity*; which declares in many places, that God's ſending his Son into the World in order to ſave the World, proceded from his *Love* and *good will* to Man(*a*). And there is not a ſingle word, in the whole New Teſtament; which mentions the leaſt ſign of Anger in God againſt *Jeſus Chriſt*, or Guilt in *Chriſt*, or *Puniſhment* undergone by him.

§ 6. Another Objection which *We* ourſelves have formerly made to *Chriſtianity*, is the nar-

(*y*) *Levit.* xvi. 26. (*z*) See *Hammond* on I *Cor.* iv. 13.
(*a*) *John* iii. 16, 17. vi. 38, 39, 40, 44. *Acts* iii. 26. *Rom.* iii 25. v. 8. *Gal.* iv. 4. *Eph.* iii. 2.

row

row principles upon which it is founded: which though it comes from one of *our* Nation with a worſe grace than from any other, yet we could not avoid obſerving it; while almoſt every *Chriſtian* we converſed with, poſitively inſiſted upon the damnation of every one that did not believe the abſtruſeſt points of *Chriſtianity* (and much more *Chriſtianity* itſelf) in the ſame way with themſelves; and were ſo ſanguine in that perſuaſion, as to put it into their Creeds: though, it muſt be owned, this conduct is condemned by ſome of their own people. Sir *Paul Rycaut* obſerves, very juſtly; "how can we expect or hope-for the converſion of *Turks* or *Heathens*; when they ſhall be affrighted at the church gate, by ſome oppoſites to one another of their own divided perſuaſions, with the threats of Hell and Damnation; and meet almoſt as many Anathemas, as when they remained Infidels!"

But here again we have been ſadly miſtaken; for we ſhall find upon examination, that *Chriſtianity* was never intended to prejudice either *Jews* or *Heathens*, much leſs erroneous *Chriſtians*; and is as extenſive as the Promiſe firſt made to *Abraham*, that in his ſeed ſhould all the families of the Earth be bleſſed; and afterwards to *Chriſt*, that God would make him his Salvation unto the Ends of the Earth. It deprived no other Religion of any advantages it had before; but

only added freſh inſtruction and freſh motives to a virtuous practice: and the Principles upon which it is founded extend to all Mankind (*b*); not only thoſe who receive the *Chriſtian* doctrine, but thoſe who never heard of it; as I ſhall undertake to prove. And,

1. The notion of confining the benefits of *Chriſt*'s Mediation to the Covenants entered into by Circumciſion and Baptiſm, is abſolutely contrary to the promiſe given to *Abraham*; which extended to all the families of the Earth. And as this promiſe was made before Circumciſion, there can be no plea for confining it to thoſe who were circumciſed; nor conſequently to the *Chriſtians*, who ſucceed into their Peculiarity; as keepers of the Oracles of God(*c*). For, being *prior* to ſuch Peculiarity, no Law that was made afterwards could ſuperſede it; as St. *Paul* argues (*d*): And had *Abraham* imagined, that the promiſe given to him in *Iſaac*, was to deprive all the reſt of his Poſterity by *Hagar*, *Keturah*, &c. of eternal Life; he would have looked upon it as the greateſt Curſe that could have been threaten'd him.

2. Though the *Meſſiah* was to be born of the line of *Iſaac*, and the Oracles of God were committed to that line; yet the Providence of God

(*b*) *Tit.* iii. 4.—I *John* iv. 9, 10, 11, 14, 19.
(*c*) Compare *Rom.* ix. 4. with *Rom.* iii. 2.
(*d*) *Rom* iv. 13. *Gal.* iii. 17.

over

over mankind is not ſo confined, nor the Knowledge of the divine Revelations: for theſe were certainly known to all the family of *Abraham*; and the Angel *Jehovah* appeared to *Hagar* and *Iſhmael*; and *Melchiſedek* was Prieſt of the Moſt High God, though no Covenant, that we know of, was ever made with him; and the Prophets of God were ſent to *Nineveh*, and *Babylon*, and other Countries. And therefore, when St. *Paul* ſpeaks of the ſuperior advantages of the *Jewiſh* nation, he never offers to ſay; that they only, who were in the Covenant by Circumciſion, ſhould receive eternal Life: but the chief advantage was this, that unto them were committed the Oracles of God; while the Heathen in the mean time were not acquainted with the benefits which were deſigned for them, and are therefore ſaid to be left to the uncovenanted Mercies of God; which ſome *Chriſtians* look upon as a *deſperate* and *forlorn* Hope(*e*). But the decrees of God are not void and impotent, be-

(*e*) Mrs. *Macaulay* quotes the following words from a Speech of *Oliver Cromwell*:—If we deny the ſpirit of *Jeſus Chriſt* the glory of all his Works, by which he rules Kingdoms, &c. we provoke the Mediator: and he may ſay—I'll leave you to God—I'll not intercede for you—let him tear you to pieces—I'll leave thee to fall into God's hands—Thou denieſt me my Sovereignty and Power committed to me—I'll not intercede and mediate for Thee—Thou falleſt into the hands of the living God. Hiſt. Vol. 5. p. 150.

cauſe

cauſe they are unknown. The Heathens did not know the decree of God, that they ſhould all ariſe from the grave (*f*); and yet, this will as certainly come to paſs; as if it had been no leſs plainly revealed to them, than it has been to the *Chriſtians*.

3. The Extent of *Chriſt's* Mediation is declared in the new Teſtament to be commenſurate to the Promiſe made to *Abraham*: nor indeed could it be otherwiſe; being the method by which that Promiſe is to be compleated. *Chriſt* is declared to be the Propitiation [ἱλασμὸς] for the Sins of the *whole* World(*g*). He is called the Saviour of the World (*h*); which means the ſame thing. And by his Righteouſneſs the free Gift came upon *all* men, unto Juſtification of Life (*i*): He is ſaid by the grace of God to have taſted death for *every* man (*k*); and God is ſaid to be no Reſpecter of Perſons (*l*); but in *every* Nation he that feareth God and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted of him(*m*). All this ſhews plainly, that *Chriſt* came into the World to ſave *all* Mankind; whether *Heathens*, *Jews* or *Chriſtians*: that his Redemption was *univerſal*; and, conſequently, *all* men will have eternal Life; who practiſe Righteouſneſs: *Rom.* iv.

(*f*) *Mat.* xxv. 41. (*g*) *John* ii. 2. (*h*) I *John* iv. 4. (*i*) *Rom.* v. 18. (*k*) *Heb.* ii. 9. (*l*) *Rom.* ii. 11. (*m*) *Acts* i. 35.

9, 10.

9, 10. for to theſe he has confined it, by the Terms of Salvation.

4. And this is confirmed by the account, which *Chriſt* himſelf gives of the future Judgement. "For the hour is coming, and now is; in which *all* that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice [the voice of the Son of Man], and ſhall come forth; they, that have done good, unto the reſurrection of Life; and they, that have done evil to the reſurrection of Damnation(*n*)." And the ſame account we find in St. *Matthew*; where the general Judgment is again deſcribed: and no diſtinction made among mankind, whether *Chriſtians*, *Jews*, or *Heathens*; but merely as to their moral Characters. Thoſe, who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirſty, lodged the ſtranger, cloathed the naked, viſited the ſick and impriſoned, are ſet on the right hand; and denominated *Righteous:* and thoſe, who are deſtitute of theſe virtues, are ſet on the left-hand; and denominated *Wicked:* and, it is declared, without any farther diſtinction, as the final Sentence; "Theſe ſhall go into everlaſting Puniſhment, but the Righteous into Life eternal(*o*)."

But

(*n*) *John* v. 28.

(*o*) *Mat.* xxv. 46. *Limborch* in his *Amica Collatio*, p. 333. ſays; If any among the *Gentiles* lived honeſtly, according to the Law of Nature; It is credible, that a munificent and benevolent God will not leave their Probity

But all theſe Texts ſome *Chriſtians* explain away from a *general* to a *confined* Senſe. By the Saviour of the *World*, they underſtand the Saviour of *Chriſtians*; by the free gift coming upon *all Men*, they mean upon *all Chriſtians*; by a propitiation for the ſins of the *whole World*, they mean the *World* of *Believers*. And though they allow, that all Men ſhall ariſe from the dead, both Heathens and Chriſtians, to ſtand before the Judgment ſeat of *Chriſt*; yet when it is added, "they who have done good ſhall come forth to the reſurrection of Life;" they confine the expreſſion to thoſe only, who are in Covenant with God: and in like manner arbitrarily explain all other Texts of Scripture upon the ſubject.

To all which it may be anſwered: If all the Heathens are redeemed from Death by *Chriſt*; and thereby receive *one* benefit of the *Chriſtian* Covenant, and that a moſt material one: then the effect of *Chriſt*'s death is not confined to the Covenants; but reaches, in *one* of its main branches, to the whole Heathen World. And, if this be the caſe; the *Chriſtians* can have no right to confine the effects of it, in its *other* branches; unleſs they can ſhew ſome good Reaſon, why they preſume to do it; and bring ſome

bity unhonoured; and that they will receive ſome part in a future Life: but what or how great, I cannot pretend to ſay.

Texts,

Texts, which ſhall make a plain exception againſt the eternal Life of the virtuous Heathens; and prove, that the general expreſſions already quoted muſt *neceſſarily* be ſo confined; and that the Heathens are to ſtand before the Judgment ſeat of *Chriſt*, merely to be condemned; without any regard to their actions. But ſuch Texts are no where to be found.

On the contrary; theſe *Chriſtians*, inſtead of giving their Reaſons why they confine the general words of Scripture, which ſpeak of *all mankind*, to the *Chriſtians* only; ſeem to expect that their opponents ſhall not only produce theſe general expreſſions on their ſide of the queſtion; but others alſo of a more particular nature, wherein the eternal Life of the virtuous Heathens is ſpoken-of alone, without being included in ſuch general Terms.

Now this expectation, if we reflect upon it, muſt appear to be moſt unreaſonable; from the very nature of the thing: Becauſe it could very ſeldom, if ever, fall-in with the purpoſe of *Chriſt* or his Apoſtles, when calling men to enter into the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, to make any particular mention of the Salvation of thoſe, who ſhould never hear of any ſuch Kingdom: and, when they were perſuading men of the benefits of *Chriſt*'s Revelation, to ſuch as would receive his doctrine; to inform

them of the benefits of his Mediation, to ſuch as they were not preaching to. Theſe opportunities could happen very ſeldom; and the neceſſity of mentioning it, when it might accidentally fall-in, be much leſs frequent. And therefore, it is no wonder, if the Texts to that purpoſe ſhould not be numerous; it is more wonderful, that there ſhould be any at all. However, thoſe that we have are ſufficiently expreſs; and much more determinate, than could be expected.—The firſt that I ſhall mention is in the Epiſtle to *Timothy*.

1. "He is the Saviour of *all* Men; eſpecially of thoſe that believe(*p*). The Salvation here ſpoken-of, if we look into the context, hath the promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come; for it refers-to that faithful ſaying, which is contained in the 8th verſe. Here then we have a plain Text; in which the bleſſings of a future Life, though more eſpecially belonging to *thoſe that believed*, are yet promiſed to *all* Men; and, conſequently, to ſome *who did not believe*.

2. This is confirmed by St. *John*. "He is the Propitiation for *our* Sins: and not for *ours* only, but for the Sins of the *whole* World (*q*):" upon which I will give you the reaſoning of the

(*p*) I *Tim.* iv. 10. See Dr. *Whitby*'s note upon this paſſage.

(*q*) I *Jo.* ii. 2.

learned

learned *Robert Barclay*, in his Apology. "The way which our adverſaries take to evade this Teſtimony, is moſt fooliſh and ridiculous. The World, here, ſay they, is *the World of Believers:* For this Commentary we have nothing but their own aſſertion; and ſo, while it manifeſtly deſtroys the Text, may be juſtly rejected. For, firſt, let them ſhew me, if they can, in all the Scripture; where the *whole World* is taken for *Believers only:* I ſhall ſhew them, where it is many times taken for the quite contrary.—As, the *World* knows me not, I am not of this *World* (*r*); &c(*s*)." Secondly, the Apoſtle in this very place contra-diſtinguiſheth the *World* from the *Saints*, thus; "And not for *ours only*, but for the Sins of the *whole World*." What means the Apoſtle by *ours* here? is not that the Sins of Believers? was not he one of thoſe Believers? and was not this an univerſal Epiſtle, written to all the Saints that then were? So that, according to theſe mens Comment, there ſhould be a very unneceſſary and fooliſh Redundancy in the Apoſtle's words; as if he had ſaid, he is the Propitiation not only for the *Sins of all Be-*

(*r*) I *Jo.* v. 19. the whole World lieth in Wickedneſs. See *Whitby* on I *Jo.* ii. 2.

(*s*) *Pſ.* xvii. 14. *Iſ.* xiii. 11. *Matt.* xviii. 7. *Jo.* vii. 7. viii. 26. xii. 19. xiv. 17. xv. 18, 19. xvii. 14. xviii. 20. I *Cor.* i. 21. ii. 12. vi. 2. *Gal.* vi. 14. *Ja.* i. 27. II *Pet.* ii. 20. I *Jo.* ii 15. iii. 1. iv. 4, 5, and many others.

lievers; but alſo for the *Sins of all Believers*. Is not this to make the Apoſtle's words void of good ſenſe? Let them ſhew us, where ever there is ſuch a manner of ſpeaking in all the Scripture; where any of the Penmen firſt name the Believers *in concreto* with themſelves, and then contra-diſtinguiſh them from ſome other *whole World* of Believers: That *whole World*, if it be of Believers, muſt not be the World we live in. But we need no better interpreter for the Apoſtle, than himſelf; who uſes the very ſame expreſſion and phraſe, in the ſame epiſtle; (ch. v. 19.) ſaying, We know, that *we* are of God; and the *whole World* lieth in Wickedneſs: There cannot be found in all the Scripture, two places which run more parallel; ſeeing in both, the ſame Apoſtle, in the ſame Epiſtle, to the ſame Perſons, contra-diſtinguiſheth *himſelf* and the *Saints* to whom he writes, from the *whole World*; which, according to theſe mens Commentary, ought to be underſtood of *Believers*: as if *John*; had ſaid; we know, that *particular* believers are of God; but the *whole World* of believers lieth in wickedneſs. What abſurd wreſting of Scripture is this? and yet it may as well be pleaded-for, as the other; for they differ not at all. Seeing then that the Apoſtle *John* tells us plainly; that *Chriſt* not only died for *him*, and for the Saints and Members of the Church of God to whom he wrote; but for the *whole World*: let

us

us then hold it for a certain and undoubted Truth; notwithſtanding the Cavils of ſuch as oppoſe(*t*)."

To this I ſhall add the Words and Reaſoning of St. *Paul*, in the ſecond Chapter to the *Romans*(*u*). "God will render to every Man, according to his Deeds: to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal Life:" and again; "glory and honour and peace, to every one that worketh good; to the *Jew* firſt, and alſo to the *Gentile:* for there is no Reſpect of Perſons with God, &c." The Apoſtle does not ſpeak here of the *Gentiles*, who have received the Goſpel; but of thoſe, who having no [revealed] Law, were a Law unto themſelves: (verſe 14) of whom he declares, that by patient continuance in well-doing they ſhall receive eternal Life (ver. 6. 7. 11). The Argument relates to the *Jews* and *Heathens*, while they continued ſuch; and proves, that if the Uncircumciſion keep the Law, it ſhall be counted for Circumciſion: (ver. 26.) and the reaſon he gives is, becauſe they do by Nature (the ſame Nature which they received from God) the things contained in the Law; and it will not be the hearers of the Law, but the doers of the

(*t*) *Barclay*'s Apol. p. 123, &c.

(*u*) *Ro.* ii. 6, &c. 11, &c. 14.

Law,

Law, that will be juſtified: (verſe 13.) and, if that be the caſe, there can be no queſtion, but the virtuous *Heathen* ſhall receive the ſame reward as the virtuous *Chriſtian*; eſpecially, as they will be both judged by the ſame Rule. For the Uncircumciſion (which St. *Paul* here ſpeaks of as keeping the Law; that is, the moral Law, or the Law of Reaſon and Nature; verſe 15.) being counted for Circumciſion, can mean no leſs than being entitled to the benefits of the Covenant; and, conſequently, the virtuous Heathen will be equally rewarded with eternal Life, as the virtuous *Chriſtian*.

Mr. *Barclay*, juſt quoted, argues thus unanſwerably(*x*). In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted: but many of the Heathens feared God, and worked Righteouſneſs: therefore many of the Heathens are accepted.

The *Minor* he proves, from the example of *Cornelius*; and farther thus. He, that *doth* the things contained in the Law; feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs: but the Heathens *did* the things contained in the Law: therefore they feared God, and worked Righteouſneſs—Again; he argues, from the 13th verſe; without adding a word of his own, as he obſerves. "The *doers* of the Law ſhall be juſtified: but the Gentiles

(*x*) *Barclay*. p. 188, 189.

do

do the things contained in the Law: therefore the Gentiles ſhall be juſtified."

§ 7. But to all theſe declarations of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, it is objected by ſome; that our Salvation, or the terms of our Acceptance, do not depend upon our Actions; but upon our *Faith:* and, to prove this, they quote the following Text—" He, that *believeth* and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but He, that *believeth* not ſhall be damned(*y*).

I ſhall firſt prove, from the reaſon and nature of the thing, that this Concluſion muſt be falſe: and then ſhew, that the Text here quoted, does not relate to a future Judgement; but to the admiſſion of the *Chriſtian* Converts into the Church of *Chriſt* on Earth.

And *firſt* I argue; that, if *Adam* had not ſinned, eternal Life would have been the reward of his Righteouſneſs; for Death entered by Sin, and without Sin there would have been no ſuch thing; and no other Faith would have been neceſſary, but a belief in God; and the belief in *Chriſt* became neceſſary, not as an End; but a Means to bring us back to the practice of Righteouſneſs, upon which eternal Life was at firſt promiſed to *Adam:* And therefore, as the End is ſuperior to the Means, ſo Righteouſneſs or Obedience is ſuperior to Faith in *Chriſt*. And, accordingly, though Righteouſneſs, without Faith

(*y*) *Mark* xvi. 16.

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in *Chriſt*, had the promiſe of eternal Life annexed to it; as in the inſtance of *Adam*: yet Faith, *without Righteouſneſs*, can have no ſuch Privilege; becauſe at the end of the world the Son of Man ſhall ſend forth his Angels, and ſhall gather out of his Kingdom all Scandals, and them which do iniquity; and ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire(*z*). [And this will be the fate of ſome; whoſe Faith was ſo great, as not only to admit them into the *Chriſtian* Church; but to work Miracles in the name of *Chriſt*:] and he ſhall ſay; depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity. In all ſuch, their *Faith* will be ſo far from ſaving them(*a*); that it will aggravate their condemnation, becauſe they knew their Maſter's will and did it not.

If it be urged, that *Abraham* was ſaved by *Faith*; St. *James* has given the anſwer, that "by *Works* was his Faith made perfect(*b*); and that which makes perfect is of a ſuperior quality: ſo that Righteouſneſs is ſuperior to Faith, as Holineſs to the Lord was ſuperior to Sacrifice, and made-up for the defects of it(*c*). The Faith of

(*z*) *Matt.* xiii. 41, 42.

(*a*) When the Word *Salvation* in the new Teſtament means no more than an Entrance into the *Chriſtian* Church, nothing more is neceſſary to it than *Faith*: but when *Salvation* means eternal Life, Faith is never ſpoken-of in the Scriptures as ſufficient; but the *Obedience of Faith*: as in *Rom* xvi. 26. See *Taylor* on the *Romans*, p. 97.

(*b*) *James* ii. 22. (*c*) *Exod.* xxviii. 36.

Abraham

Abraham conſiſted not merely in *believing* God, but in *obeying* him; as appears from the ſeveral inſtances which the Apoſtle gives of it, when he deſcribes it as moſt highly meritorious. "By Faith *Abraham*, when he was called to go into a place which he ſhould hereafter receive for an inheritance, obey'd(*d*)—by Faith he ſojourned in the land of Promiſe—by Faith, when he was tried, he offered up his Son *Iſaac*: and therefore St. *James* ſays, he was juſtified by *Works* (*e*): and St. *Paul*'s argument comes to the ſame Concluſion at laſt: for he tells us, that his *Faith* was counted to him for *Righteouſneſs* (*f*); which is a plain conceſſion, that it was his *Righteouſneſs* that was rewarded; and that *Righteouſneſs* is ſuperior to *Faith*. For, if it were not ſo, the accounting his Faith for Righteouſneſs, would not have been a Favour to him, but an Injury.

If the Text be urged, which ſays—"the Juſt ſhall live by Faith(*g*)"—the anſwer is, that it is a falſe Tranſlation; and it ſhould have been the Juſt by Faith ſhall live. The Context ſhews this to be the Senſe of it; being thus connected—The Juſt by Faith ſhall live; for the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of Men, who hold the Truth [that is, the true

(*d*) *Heb.* xi. 8, 9, 17. (*e*) *James* ii. 24. (*f*) *Gen.* xv. 6. *Gal.* iii. 6. *Rom.* iv. 3. (*g*) *Rom.* i. 17. ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. *Gal.* iii. 2. *Heb.* x. 38. *Heb.* ii. 4.

Faith] in unrighteouſneſs. Here we find, that thoſe, who are Juſt by Faith, or whoſe Faith prevails on them to be juſt, ſhall live: but, on the other hand, thoſe who hold the true Faith without that influence upon their conduct, ſhall ſuffer the wrath of God which is revealed againſt all ſuch. This is a plain Argument; and, agreeable to this ſenſe of it, the Apoſtle gives us a large Catalogue of ſuch as had become righteous by their Faith. And thus the Text is interpreted by *Clemens Romanus* (*b*); but, in the *Engliſh* tranſlation, this ſenſe of the words is loſt.

But, whatever reward the Faith of *Abraham* received; by being accounted to him for *Righteouſneſs*, which it brought forth; it was certainly no belief in any thing that was revealed by *Chriſt*, but a belief and obedience to God: And this was the Faith of the virtuous Heathens, and produced the ſame Effect; that is, Obedience. The belief of a God from the evidence of his Works, was the Faith of the wiſer Heathens; and this, together with a belief of the particular Revelation which he received from God, was the Faith of *Abraham*; and the belief of a *Chriſtian* Revelation is the Faith of a *Chriſtian*. Each of theſe believe all that can be expected from them, upon the Evidence that God has laid be-

(*b*) Ad. *Corin. Ox.* Ed. 1669. p. 71. τίνος χάριν εὐλογήθη ὁ πατὴρ Ἀβραάμ; οὐχὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀλήθειαν διὰ πίστεως ποιήσας;

fore

fore them; and the intrinſic Virtue of *Faith* can conſiſt in nothing elſe, but a Readineſs to believe and practiſe whatever appears upon good Evidence to be revealed by *Him*. And therefore *Chriſt* reſolves all Faith in *Him* into a belief in *God*: He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on him that ſent Me (*i*); which it is certain *Chriſt* would not have ſaid, if Faith in *Him* had been more meritorious than Faith in *God*. And to the ſame purpoſe he ſays; verily, verily, I ſay unto you; he that heareth my word, and believeth on *him that ſent me*, hath everlaſting Life; and ſhall not come into Condemnation, but hath paſſed from Death unto Life (*k*); where again we ſee, that Faith in *God* is ſpoken-of, as having the ſame effect with Faith in *Chriſt*. And in this Faith or Belief in God, there were many of the virtuous Heathens who were by no means deficient. I ſhall only mention the Faith of *Socrates*.

"This is that *Socrates*, ſays *Ludovicus Vives* (*l*), of whom nothing can be ſufficiently ſaid for his Dignity; who, as is manifeſt, was the wiſeſt of all the *Greeks*; and came neareſt to the *Chriſtian* Wiſdom. He was a man, temperate, chaſte, juſt, modeſt, patient of injuries, not greedy of riches, pleaſure, no nor of glory." *Juſtin Martyr* does not ſcruple to call him a *Chriſtian*;

(*i*) *John* xii. 44. (*k*) *John* v. 24. (*l*) in *Aug.* de Civ. Dei, L. viii. c. 2.

ſaying, all ſuch as lived according to the divine word in them, which was in all men(*m*), were *Chriſtians*; ſuch as *Socrates*, and *Heraclitus*, and others among the *Greeks*.

Xenophon, who was alſo an excellent man, hath given us this account of the Faith of *Socrates*; he believed, that the Providence of *God* extended over all things; and directed every thing, as he pleaſed (*n*): and that it is our duty, to worſhip him; and the moſt acceptable Worſhip that can be paid to him is an Obedience to his commands (*o*): and that he, who ſtrives with all his power to pleaſe him, hath good reaſon to take courage; and expect the greateſt bleſſings from him(*p*). This Faith agrees entirely with the deſcription which St. *Paul* hath given us, of that Faith which is neceſſary to pleaſe God. Without Faith, ſays he, it is impoſſible to pleaſe God; for he, that cometh unto God, muſt believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him(*q*). Now, as no reaſon can be given; why Faith in God the *Father* is not of as great merit, as Faith in God the *Son*; it remains, that the Righteouſneſs of *Socrates*, which aroſe from Faith in *God*, will be as highly rewarded; as the ſame degree of Righteouſneſs, which ariſes from Faith in *Chriſt*. Moſt certainly it

(*m*) *John* i. 9. (*n*) *Xenoph.* Mem. 1, 4, 17, 18.
(*o*) *Ib.* 4, 3, 16. (*p*) *Ib.* 17. (*q*) *Heb.* xi. 6.

can

can be no good reaſon, why it ſhould obtain a leſs reward; *merely* that it attained to the *ſame* perfection, under *greater* difficulties and diſadvantages.

Mr. *Chillingworth* (*r*) argues, as follows. "If without this belief, that *God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that ſeek him*, God will not be pleaſed; then his Will is, that we ſhould believe it: now, it is poſſible; that they, who never heard of *Chriſt*, may ſeek God: therefore, it is true; that even they ſhall pleaſe him, and be rewarded by him." And however Mr. *Chillingworth* uſes this argument only with reſpect to ſuch as are brought to the Faith afterwards; it equally concludes for thoſe, who never heard of *Chriſt*. And it is equally abſurd to imagine; becauſe the Heathens are ſpoken-of *in general*, as at *enmity* with God; that therefore *every individual*, ſuch as *Socrates*, *Heraclitus*, *Xenophon*, *Marcus Antoninus*, &c. muſt have been at *enmity* with him; as to imagine, every individual among the *Jews* and *Chriſtians* is *holy*; becauſe they are called collectively a *holy* people.

There remains to be conſidered the Text, which is quoted, on the other ſide of the queſtion, from the Goſpel of St. *Mark*; "He, that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he, that believeth not, ſhall be damned(*s*)."

(*r*) *Relig.* of *Prot.* ch. iii. ſect. 13. (*s*) *Mark* xvi. 16.

Theſe

Theſe words, though ſo often applied to a future Judgement, do not appear to have any relation to it; but only to the Admiſſion of the *Chriſtian* Converts into the *Chriſtian* Church, after *Chriſt*'s aſcenſion; upon the ſame Terms as he admitted them himſelf. *Chriſt* was now leaving this World; and giving Commiſſion to his Diſciples what to do after his departure from them. In which Commiſſion we find he gives Them the ſame powers, which He himſelf had exerciſed; and orders them to uſe them in the ſame manner. He tells them to go into all the world, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature; and adds, he that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved; and he that believeth not ſhall be damned.

Now the firſt part of this Text [he that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved] anſwers directly to the declaration of forgiveneſs to all ſuch as believed in him, (upon their receiving him as the *Meſſiah*;) when, upon their Converſion, their Sins were immediately forgiven them (*t*): and to the very deſign of the Goſpel; which was to reconcile the World to God, by declaring his good-will to men in forgiving their Iniquities(*u*). And it was equivalent to the expreſſion uſed by *Chriſt* to a certain woman that believed on him; and at other times; "thy

(*t*) *Mark*, iv. 12. *Matt.* ix. 2, &c. (*u*) *Rom.* iii. 25.

Faith

Faith hath ſaved thee; go in Peace(*x*)." And the latter part of the verſe; [he that believeth not ſhall be damned; that is, *condemned* or accountable for his Sins;] anſwers to the denunciation, which *Chriſt* had often made againſt thoſe who would not receive him; that they ſhould die in their Sins. Thus the Evangeliſt recites the words of *Chriſt* to *Nicodemus*: He that believeth on him, (the Son of God) is not condemned; (οὐ κίκριται·) but he that believeth not, is condemned already; becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God(*y*). And what this Damnation, or Condemnation, was; we ſee *John* viii. 24. I ſaid therefore unto you, ye ſhall die in your Sins: and this is the only ſenſe the words are capable of, conſiſtent with the Context, with the Subject that *Chriſt* was ſpeaking to; and with the other parts of the Goſpel. And the ſame ſeems to be the ſenſe of thoſe other Texts, which have made ſo much noiſe and diſturbance in the *Chriſtian* Church; "whoſe Sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whoſe Sins ye retain, they are retained(*z*):" and again, "I will give unto you the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," ſays *Chriſt* to *Peter*; "and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall

(*x*) *Luke* vii. 5. *Matt.* ix. 22, &c.
(*y*) *John* iii. 18, &c. v. 24. (*z*) *John* xx. 23.

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be looſed in Heaven(*a*)." All theſe Texts relate to the ſame point and purpoſe; viz. to declare that, upon the firſt receiving the *Chriſtian* Religion, *Chriſt*, and afterwards the Apoſtles in his name, *forgave* thoſe that believed, and were baptized; and what was then done here, would be confirmed in Heaven: but they have no relation at all to their acquittal or condemnation at *the day of Judgement*; at which time, every man will be judged according to his Works; and according to what he hath received.

§ 8. But here it has been argued, by the enemies of Revelation; (ſuch is the perverſeneſs of Mankind!) that, every Man will be equally well pleaſing to God, who does as well as he can; or is equally *ſincere*: and, conſequently, will be equally rewarded; whether with or without a Revelation. I anſwer; There is no doubt, but that he who has performed his Duty, according to the beſt Light he can procure; beyond which Man cannot go, nor God demand his ſervice (*b*); will gain the favour of God, and be accepted by him: but no reaſon can be drawn from hence, to prove; that another, who has greater abilities and opportunities, and has by the proper uſe of them done more good and acceptable works, and has actu-

(*a*) *Matt.* xvi. 19. (*b*) See *Hoadly*'s anſwer to *Hart*, in the Poſtſ. to the Bp. of *Oxford*, p. 223. Octavo Ed.

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ally carried-on the deſigns of God more punctually and perfectly; will not thereby deſerve a greater Reward, and receive according to his *real work* and *labour*. If this were not the caſe, "all the Writings of Philoſophers and Moraliſts, all the Inſtructions that have been ever given to Mankind, in matters of Religion and Morality; would have been perfectly needleſs, and of no uſe(*c*)." Nay, the caſe would be better with the moſt ignorant Savages, than the moſt enlighten'd *Chriſtians*; for the latter would be liable to ſeverer Puniſhment, if they neglected their duties; and yet entitled to no greater a reward, if they performed them. But the Truth is far otherwiſe: for, though Sincerity recommends all men to the favour of God, whether their Abilities and Talents be more or leſs; yet it by no means prevents a variety of Stations and Rewards: becauſe we ſhall be judged according to our Works, or the actual Uſe we have made of our ſuperior Talents. And therefore it muſt be of infinite Conſequence for us to be rightly informed of the Will of God; that we may the better know how to pleaſe him. For it is the Knowledge of the Truth, with regard to the Being, Attributes and Providence of God, and the nature of moral Rectitude, and moral Obligation; which gives *life* and *activity*

(*c*) *Leland*'s View, &c. vol. I. p. 158.

to that very Sincerity, upon which our acceptance with God is founded: and it is by the regular and conſtant practiſe of thoſe Principles of Truth and Righteouſneſs, which we know or believe; that we improve in moral Excellence, and attain to a praiſe-worthy Character.

The knowledge of *Chriſtianity* was therefore of greater uſe to thoſe to whom it was revealed, than can be eaſily conceived; as they were thereby delivered out of a ſtate of Darkneſs, Ignorance, and Superſtition, into a marvelous Light; with regard to the Unity of God, and his moral Attributes, and the hiſtory of his Providence, and the nature of moral Perfection, and the promiſe of eternal Life to the Righteous.

I envy not the powers of mind, how great ſoever, which the Heathen Philoſophers enjoyed: they were of great ſervice to Virtue without doubt, as far as they were ſtudied and underſtood; and made the world more inquiſitive after Truth, and more capable of examining into the worth and dignity of the *Chriſtian* Revelation. But they neither preached the true doctrine of the one God, nor had they a complete notion of Morality, nor authority to enjoin the practiſe of it upon ſubſtantial motives; nor liberty to preach what they believed; nor could their doctrines have reached to the bulk of Mankind; for the eſtabliſhed Religion was a Con-

Contradiction to their Philoſophy: and there was no likelihood of their reforming the Notions, or amending the Practice, of the common people; while the Gods they worſhipped were looked-upon to be ſuch monſters of Immorality of every kind; and even the Philoſophers themſelves agreed in the outward forms of worſhip, and in the general Maxim, that the Religion of the Country ſhould always be complied-with. Theſe defects remained to be ſupplied by a divine Revelation.—

And the plain Hiſtory of God's Providence over Mankind from the beginning of the world, gave men, at one view, a Love and Admiration of *his* Perfections; and a ſovereign Contempt of the heathen Deities, and all *their* Imperfections. And whatever had been ſaid by their beſt Writers upon the nature of moral Duties, fell infinitely ſhort of that perfection of Godlineſs, in the example which *Chriſt* has ſet before us; in leaving the glory and happineſs of Heaven, and humbling himſelf to take upon him the form of a Servant, and to ſuffer indignity, pain and death, for our Salvation. For why? this Conduct did not ariſe from the ſenſe of *moral Obligation*, but from the *more noble* principle of Benevolence and Love.

As theſe things gave men a more exalted notion of Virtue and Goodneſs; ſo the motives to live according to this more perfect exemplar,

were more powerful, than any that could be collected from Philoſophy; and enabled them to go through all Trials and Difficulties, in order to propagate the Truth. The Philoſophers did not know, whether eternal Life was to be the lot of pious men; whether it was the *original* deſign of God, when he created the world; nor whether they ſhould obtain it by a virtuous Life: They *did* know, that it would not follow from his *Juſtice*; becauſe no man had merited it: and their notion of his *Goodneſs* was very confuſed. Whereas in the *Chriſtian* Revelation we find; that a future ſtate and kingdom was the *original* deſign of God, when he created us; and that he hath conſtituted *Jeſus Chriſt* to be the Lord and King of it; in which he will reward his ſincere followers with life and happineſs. The knowledge of theſe things hath connected our Duty with our Intereſt; a thing ſo much wanted among the Heathens, to give life and energy to their virtuous Principles: and the *Certainty* of a Reſurrection to Life, the moſt powerful of all motives to a virtuous Practice; (the bare Hope of which among them depended entirely upon uncertain concluſions from more uncertain premiſes:) is become among the *Chriſtians* an undoubted article of *Faith*; founded upon plain *Fact*, and conſequently level to the apprehenſion of all men; and made the grand and univerſal Motive of Religious Conduct.

Conduct. So that, though God winked at the former times of Ignorance; yet, when he revealed to the Heathens, that he had appointed a day, in which he would judge the world in righteouſneſs; he at the ſame time ſupplied them with a clearer notion of moral Excellence, than they had before; and with ſtronger motives to the practice of Virtue.

Who can read without Emotion the dying words of *Socrates*, the greateſt Light of the Heathens, upon this ſubject? "I have great hopes, ſays he; that it is better for me, to be condemned to die: For either Death deprives us of all Thought, or it is the paſſage to another Country. If it be merely a privation of Senſe, like a ſound and unmoleſted Sleep; then Death is Gain: for how few days are preferable to ſuch a Night! But if it be a paſſage into the regions which are inhabited by thoſe, who have paſſed through life; and we ſhall there meet with ſuch, as have lived piouſly and juſtly; how delightful is the thought of ſuch a Journey! What a pleaſure to mix with ſuch a Society! Surely I would go through many Deaths, to experience this Truth." How noble and generous are theſe ſentiments! But, when St. *Paul* conſiders the ſame Subject, with what ſuperior Majeſty does the Scene open; and diſcover to our view, without the leaſt appearance of doubt to caſt a ſhade upon any part of it, the enli-

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vening Proſpect of Glory and Honour and Immortality within our Reach?—We are come, ſays he, to the City of the living God, the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, and to an innumerable Company of Angels; to the general Aſſembly and Church of the firſt-born, which are enrolled in Heaven; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the Spirits of juſt men made perfect; and to *Jeſus*, the Mediator of the new Covenant. *Heb.* xii.

§ 9. But, in anſwer to all that can be ſaid in favour of *Chriſtianity*, as deſigned and calculated to improve Mankind; the Deiſts have formed two of their moſt capital Objections. If God, ſay they, was *always* willing that *all* Men ſhould be ſaved; and *Chriſt* came into the World, to *reform* it from its Errors, and introduce Virtue and Righteouſneſs; how comes it to paſs, that we ſee no ſuch Reformation made; but the *Chriſtians* are as bad as other men? Or, if it be ſaid, that *Chriſtianity* has produced ſuch an extraordinary effect; then, Why was not the *Chriſtian* Revelation given *ſooner*? why has it made ſo little *progreſs* in the world? why was it not *univerſal*? how could thoſe be reformed and ſaved by *Chriſt*, who never heard of him?

1. If *Chriſt* came into the world to reform it, and introduce Virtue and Righteouſneſs; this, they allow, would have been a noble Scheme indeed: but where, ſay they, is there any appearance

pearance of ſuch an extraordinary effect upon the conduct of the *Chriſtians?* we don't ſee, that they are better than other Men. What good then hath the death of *Chriſt* done; if the World is no better than it was before?

I ſhall not ſtay here to examine, whether this be a true or a falſe repreſentation of the *Fact*; but only obſerve that, if the World is not improved by the Chriſtian Revelation, it is entirely owing to their not obſerving its Precepts; and, that all arguments againſt Revelation, founded upon the ſuppoſition that it was deſigned to make Men virtuous, and hath not done ſo; and, therefore, could not come from God; may be as ſtrongly urged againſt Reaſon, as againſt Revelation: and, conſequently, they are not the proper Objections of a *Deiſt*; but of an *Atheiſt*. However, let the Objection come from the one or the other, it is equally weak and trifling. God Almighty reveals himſelf to Men, as to rational Beings and moral Agents; capable of receiving and making a proper uſe of this, as well as all his other bleſſings; but, if they will not make uſe of them to the purpoſe for which he deſigned them, and to which their own underſtanding was able to have directed them; what can be more trifling than to urge this as a proof, that God did not ſend them ſuch bleſſings; or that he did not ſend them to ſuch ends and uſes. Has a man no Eyes, or no Underſtanding;

ſtanding; whenever he refuſes to make uſe of them?

The Aſſertion, that God was always willing that *all* Men ſhould be ſaved, and that *all* Men ſhould come to the knowledge of the Truth, &c. if taken in an *abſolute* ſenſe; as if God was willing that all Men ſhould be ſaved, *whether they would obey his commands or not*; and that all Men ſhould come to the knowledge of the Truth, *whether they would receive his inſtruction or not*; is a falſe repreſentation of things. God never deſigned that any ſhould be ſaved, or come to the knowledge of the Truth; but thoſe, who would uſe the proper means to that end, when he had put it into their power. Again; where does the Deiſt find in Scripture, in what degree *Chriſt* was, at his firſt coming, to make a Reformation of Mankind; how far it was to extend in any given time; that he ſhould pretend to avail himſelf of ſuch knowledge, and conclude that the End of his coming into the world has not been fulfilled? God, no doubt, deſigned his Propheſies concerning the Perſon and Character of the *Meſſiah*, to be the ground of our Faith in him, when he ſhould come; and yet, when he was now ſoon to appear, what ſays the Prophet *Iſaiah*?—Who hath believed our Report?—And, in like manner, though *Chriſt* has revealed the will of God, and given the ſtrongeſt Evidence to the divinity of his Miſſion; yet the

the Scripture never gives us the leaſt intimation, that the World ſhall be ſo improved by it; as to be ready to receive Him, at his *ſecond* appearance; on the contrary, *Chriſt* himſelf queſtions, whether, when the ſon of Man cometh, he ſhall find Faith on the earth; the force of all this Evidence will, by the careleſſneſs and folly and wickedneſs of Men, be ſo far impaired and loſt. The *firſt* coming of *Chriſt*, conſidered merely as to the Revelation then given, was of the ſame Nature with former Revelations; and ſtill continues to have its effects upon all, who ſincerely believe it; be the number great or ſmall: but it was never deſigned to reform and amend thoſe, who would not receive it. And *Chriſt* himſelf has taught us, by his Prophet; how to reaſon properly upon this Subject, and not be diſcouraged at Appearances; when he laments the ill Succeſs of his own Miniſtry, and then informs us of its happy Conſequences. "Then I ſaid, I have laboured in vain; I have ſpent my Strength for nought, and in vain: yet, ſurely, my judgement is with the Lord; and my work with my God. And now ſaith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his Servant, to bring *Jacob* again to him; though *Iſrael be not gathered*, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord; and my God ſhall be my ſtrength. And he ſaid; it is a light thing that thou ſhouldſt be my Servant, to raiſe-up the tribes of *Jacob*,

and to reſtore the preſerved of *Iſrael*; I will give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou mayſt be my Salvation unto the ends of the Earth.—Kings ſhall ſee and ariſe, Princes alſo ſhall worſhip," &c(*d*).

But was the Reformation of the world the *only* or even the *chief* End, for which *Chriſt* came and died? an end, that might, for any thing that appears, have been as fully compleated by his ſitting upon the throne of *David*, and ſending forth his laws to all the earth with Power and Authority; as he will probably do, at his *ſecond* coming to reſtore the Theocracy? or does the new Teſtament teach us, that a ſingle Perſon will be ſaved by an exact Obedience to what he taught us? ſo far from it; that it aſſures us, our Salvation depends upon the Righteouſneſs of *Chriſt*; and the Power *he* received, in reward of it, to diſpenſe Salvation as a free Gift: For it is *Chriſt* alone, that gives eternal Life; our own Righteouſneſs only renders us fit objects of that free Gift.

The *chief* end of *Chriſt*'s Humiliation and Death was not, therefore, ſo immediately for the ſake of what he revealed, as of what he performed: not ſo much to reform the world by what he then preached, as to conſummate the Prophet; and thereby gain to himſelf thoſe powers, by which he became a Prince and a Sa-

(*d*) *Iſ.* xlix.

viour;

viour; and upon which the Accompliſhment of all the extraordinary Propheſies of the happy ſtate of the Church in future ages, to which the Propheſy of *Iſaiah* juſt quoted particularly relates, entirely depend: and there are millions of Souls, who will be brought to Happineſs by him, as a *Prince* and a *Saviour*; who never heard of him, as a *Prophet*; nor of any of his Revelations. And accordingly, Sir *Iſaac Newton*(*e*) clearly diſtinguiſhes between the things that were to be done at the firſt and ſecond Coming of *Chriſt*. "In the firſt, he comes as a Prophet; in the ſecond, as a King: in the firſt, the Prophet was conſummated, and the moſt holy anointed; in the ſecond, he comes to be a Prince and reign:" to which may be added; in the firſt, he came to merit and gain the Powers neceſſary to conſtitute him a Saviour; in the ſecond, he will come to exerciſe and employ thoſe Powers: and the latter character of a Prince and King, is the Reward of his actions as a Prophet. "And as the few and obſcure Propheſies concerning *Chriſt*'s *firſt* coming, were for ſetting-up the *Chriſtian* Religion, which all Nations have ſince corrupted; ſo the many and clear Propheſies concerning the things to be done at his *ſecond* coming, are not only for predicting, but alſo for effecting, a Recovery of the long loſt

(*e*) Sir *Iſaac Newton* on the Propheſies, p. 132.

Truth; and ſetting-up a Kingdom, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs(*f*)." And therefore, when the *Deiſts* inſult the *Chriſtians* with ſuch kind of queſtions: what benefit have the Death and Sufferings of *Chriſt* procured, adequate to the extraordinary Nature of ſuch an Event; if the World is not reformed by it? they are making Objections upon a ſubject, which they are wholely unacquainted with: they expect thoſe things to be done, at his firſt coming in the Fleſh; which are to be brought about by the completion of the Propheſies not yet fulfilled, which relate to his coming in the Clouds of Heaven; and thoſe things to be compleated by him, as a Prophet; which are to be accompliſhed by him, as a Prince and a King: and, in conſidering the end and deſign of his firſt appearance in the ſtate of Humility and Affliction, overlook the powers which he then gained by his meritorious Death and Sufferings; upon which the immediate Salvation of Righteous men entirely depends. So little do they know of the *Chriſtian* Doctrines they oppoſe.

As to the ſecond Queſtion; Why was not the *Chriſtian* Revelation given *ſooner?* why was it not *univerſal?* and why has it made ſo little Progreſs in the world? and how can thoſe be ſaved by *Chriſt*, who never heard of him? &c.—let

(*f*) Sir *Iſaac Newton*, p. 252.

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the *Deiſt* conſider; that the Salvation of Men does not depend upon the Extent of the *Chriſtian* Revelation, nor upon the Succeſs of it, nor *when* it happened, or *where*; but upon the extent of *Chriſt*'s Power, by which he became mighty to ſave. The *Redemption* is *univerſal*; though the *Revelation* is not: and the *Salvation* will extend to all who ſhall be fit to receive it. The Prophets, who came before *Chriſt*, declared the Will of God; and called men to Repentance, and the Practiſe of moral duties; as He did: and ſo did the Philoſophers; who were raiſed-up by God to inſtruct Mankind: but They were not Saviours; for they wanted power to forgive and ſave. The Characters, therefore, are entirely different: and, as the *Prophets* were not *Saviours*; ſo we ſee, by the *partiality* of the Revelation, that, if it had pleaſed God, the *Meſſiah* might have been a *Saviour*; without being a *Prophet*. For, had he never given us any Laws at all, nor ever appeared in this World, nor revealed any thing concerning himſelf to any part of Mankind; but we had lived intirely ignorant of Him, as the *Patagonians*; yet, had he manifeſted a like Obedience to God in any other part of the Univerſe, and been thereupon rewarded and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour of Mankind; our Salvation at the day of Judgement might be accompliſhed in the ſame manner, as to the *efficient* cauſe, as it will be now;

now; that is, by the exerciſe of thoſe powers which he received, for that purpoſe, in reward of his Merits: and the effect of his Mediation be *univerſal*, as it is now.

We might indeed be very much alarmed; if we imagined the *Salvation*, which *Chriſt* brings, ſhould reach no farther than his *Revelation* does: which was ſo many years before it came, and which all Nations have ſince corrupted, and which has made ſo little progreſs in the World for many ages, ſince the riſe of the grand Apoſtaſy. But as we are not ſaved by his *Revelation*, as a *Prophet*; but by his *Power*, as a *King*; the caſe is very different: and it does not avail, at what Age of the world, or in what Part of it, he by his Obedience gained the power of raiſing the dead, forgiving ſin, and giving eternal Life; but upon his actual employment of that Power for our Salvation at the laſt day. So that though (in a reſtrained Senſe, as I obſerved) it be true, that God was always willing, that all Men ſhould be ſaved; yet a Revelation at all times, and in all places, was by no means neceſſary to that end. For, though *Chriſt* did not come into the world to ſuffer, till 4000 years after the Fall; yet the Power of his Salvation, which he gained by his Obedience when he *did* come, will be manifeſted at the laſt day over *all* ages and nations, and all the families of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in him, and the promiſe made to *Abra-*

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bam fulfilled in the full extent of the words; though the *Revelation* given by God at ſundry times, and in divers manners, be *ever ſo much confined* by the Perverſeneſs of Mankind; or ever ſo much corrupted. And if the Deiſts in *this* Country would compare their own happy ſtate, in regard to the many comforts they enjoy, ſuperior to the miſerable inhabitants of ſome *other* parts of the World; as well as in their Knowledge of *natural* Religion and *moral* Obligation; they would ſee, how abſurd it is to imagine; that God has not a ſpecial right to beſtow his bleſſings and free gifts upon different Nations or Societies of men, as he pleaſes; whether they will make a proper uſe of ſuch Advantages, or no: or to cavil at the Providence of God; becauſe a farther Knowledge of the methods of his Government, and nobler Principles of action and motives to Virtue, are revealed to *ſome* Men than to *others*.

But, while the *Deiſts* object to the ſuperior Advantages of the *Chriſtians* over the reſt of Mankind, as being inconſiſtent with the impartiality of Providence; it muſt ſurely be abſurd at the ſame time to object, that it is in the power of the *Chriſtians* to loſe thoſe Advantages by their own neglect or wickedneſs; and ſo reduce themſelves to a level with other Men. God cannot be expected to force his bleſſings upon them; wherher they will or no. And,

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The Cauſes, why *Chriſtianity* has been *loſt* in ſeveral parts of the world where it was once received; and *not received* in others, where it has been preached; are chiefly theſe two: firſt, the Corruption of its Doctrines; and ſecondly, the Wickedneſs of its Profeſſors.

I. The Corruption of its Doctrines, as *Cyril* relates, was objected to the *Chriſtians*, by the Emperor *Julian*, but a few years after the Council of *Nice*, in theſe Words; "Your adding to that *ancient* dead man *Jeſus*, many *new* dead Men, who can ſufficiently abominate?" And again; "if *Chriſtians* had adhered to the precepts of the *Hebrews*; they would have worſhipped *one* God, inſtead of *many*: and not a Man, or rather *many* unhappy Men. And he accuſes them, that they adored the Wood of the Croſs; making figures of it on their Foreheads, and before their Houſes(*g*)." "And in the days of *Cyril* we find, that the Virgin *Mary* was called the Queen of Heaven, and the Mother of God; and ſo decreed to be, in the Councils of *Epheſus* and *Chalcedon*; which are Teſts of Hereſy in *England*: and *Cyril* himſelf, who is ſaid to have preſided at the Council of *Epheſus*, made no Scruple to call Her the Complement or Supplement of the Holy Trinity; and the *Collyridians* worſhipped her as God; and ſaid, there

(*g*) Sir *Iſaac Newton* on the Propheſies, p. 208.

were

were two Gods beſides the Father; viz. *Chriſt* and the Virgin *Mary*(*h*)."

And the Impoſtor *Mahomet* not only objects to the *Chriſtians*, that they aſſociated their Doctors and Monks with Almighty God in their Worſhip: but he alſo accuſes them of corrupting the Doctrine of the *Unity*, the fundamental Article of all true Religion; by their notions of the *Trinity*(*i*). And it muſt be confeſſed; that the *Chriſtians* have at leaſt ſo far obſcured and unſettled this great Truth, by the decrees of their Councils; that many of the Learned, both ancient and modern, have been at a loſs to know; whether they worſhip *one* Thing, or *three*; ἓν πρᾶγμα or τρία πράγματα(*k*). For, in order to maintain the doctrine of the divine Fœcundity, as it was ſettled at the Council of *Nice*; we are told, that God is not *unicus*; (the only God); but only *unus* (one God): that this *Unity* is of ſo tranſcendental a nature, as not to come under Number(*l*); and that God is not one in *Number*, but only in *Nature*(*m*). Other *Chriſtians*, on the other hand, declare; that

(*h*) Four Treatiſes, p. 174. *Epiph* Hær. 75. 7. Lib. iii. *Sale's Koran*, p. 35. (*i*) See Letter I. p. 16. (*k*) Letter I. p. 61. (*l*) *Allix*, Jew. Ch. 121, 168. (*m*) *Baſil*, and *Juſtin Martyr*. See Letter I. p. 167. Theſe Writers mean'd to oppoſe the *Sabellian* Notion of *one* numerical ſubſtance: by maintaining *three* numerical ſubſtances of the ſame generical Nature; as, three Men are *one* in Nature, though *three* in Number.

God is one, both in *Number*, and in *Nature*; one numerical Subſtance, conſiſting of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: which *Athanaſius* and *Epiphanius* declare to be *Sabellianiſm*(*n*). Others ſay; that God is *three* Subſtances, joined together inſeparably by an *Emperichoreſis*; and that, if it was not for this *Emperichoreſis*, there would be *three* Gods; and that no one of them is God, excluſive of the other two: (and if this be true, it muſt follow unavoidably; that, without this *Emperichoreſis*, there would be no God at all:) and thus the very *Being* of God, as well as his *Unity*, is ſuppoſed to depend upon—we know not what—moſt certainly upon what does not come under our Idea of neceſſary Exiſtence: and this, we are told by the Learned, was the doctrine of the *Nicene* Council(*o*). But others, in direct oppoſition to this, declare; that *every one* of them is of himſelf both God and Lord (*p*): which is condemned by *Athanaſius*, *Bull*, *Petavius*, &c. as being Polytheiſm. *Athanaſius* ſays; We do not acknowledge three *Hypoſtaſes*, divided or ſeparate by themſelves; that we may not comply with the Pagan Polytheiſm(*q*). And ſome divines have drawn the line of their Orthodoxy ſo nicely as to aſſert; that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are *three* and every one *diſtinctly* God; and yet deny that

(*n*) Letter I, Note viii. p. 166. (*o*) Let. I. p. 61, 219. (*p*) *Athan.* Creed. (*q*) See *Cudworth*, p. 614.

they

they are *three*, and every one *a diſtinct* God(*r*). Theſe different Notions were brought into the Church, at different Times; as the *Sabellian*, *Athanaſian*, or *Pſeudo-Athanaſian* Hereſies prevailed; and are all of them eſtabliſhed together, in ſome of the *Chriſtian* Churches; as if they were all orthodox, and conſiſtent with one another. The *firſt*, by the Council of *Lateran*(*s*); and by the ſecond and fourth Articles agreed upon at *London* in 1562, and by the *proper Preface* in the Communion Service for *Trinity* Sunday: the *ſecond* of them, by making the four firſt general Councils the Teſts of Hereſy (*t*): and the *third*, by the *Pſeudo-Athanaſian* Creed: for it ſeems to be a kind of Infatuation among the *Chriſtians*, if it does not proceed from mere Careleſsneſs; that there is not one of the Weſtern Churches, but what pretends to follow the Faith of *Athanaſius*; and yet they are every one of them condemned by him, (in their Principles,) as *Sabellians* and *Polytheiſts*.—The Confuſion and Uncertainty of the *Chriſtians'* Faith is no leſs; when they aſſert, that there are two Perſons in the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father; from whom they received their Exiſtence. For, if they mean by this, that there are three conſcious Beings co-equal

(*r*) *Beverege*. (*s*) See Let. I. p. 213. Note xx.
(*t*) *Blackſtone's* Comment. Vol. IV. p. 49, 50. Letter I. p. 61.

and co-eternal; they muſt neceſſarily mean three *Gods*: and, if they mean one Supreme God, under three different Characters; they muſt allow, that the One Supreme God did ſuffer Pain and Death; which is the Hereſy of the *Patripaſſians*:—and, if they mean *three* unſubſtantial Characters, or modes of Exiſtence; then they muſt hold, that it was a Character only, and not a real ſubſtantial Being, that ſuffered for Mankind; and there can be no medium between a real Subſtance, and an unſubſtantial Character or mode of Exiſtence; and therefore, to ſpeak as ſome do, of a Character *WHO*—has no Meaning in it; and is no Language. In ſhort, the plain Doctrine of the *Unity*, viz. that God is One, and One only (*u*); which ought to be the firſt Article in *every Chriſtian* Church; has never been maintain'd in *any one* of them, without ſome reſervation or explanation; that has rendered it as doubtful, as if it had never been aſſerted.

The decrees of the Councils, upon theſe and ſuch like queſtions, carried by a majority of votes, amidſt riot and confuſion; gave riſe to thoſe *myſteries*, which Sir *Paul Ricaut* mentions; when, ſpeaking of the *Greeks* and *Turks* in the *Morea*, he owns; that, "if Education were the ſole motive and principle, *Turciſm* would ſooner root than *Chriſtianity*; having opportunity equal,

(*u*) See the Definition of *Maimonides*, Let. I. p. 218.

and

and in eaſineſs of things naturally to be believed the advantage before the *myſterious* doctrines of *our* Faith(*x*)." Again, he ſays: "the *Turks* do not decimate the *Chriſtian* Children, as they uſed; becauſe ſo many of them turn *Mahometans:* and of *other* parts and nations ſuch numbers flock daily to the profeſſion of *Turciſm*; that there is no need of this unnatural addition, to increaſe the power and kingdom of the *Turk*(*y*). And to what can this be owing; but to the Corruptions which were introduced into the *Chriſtian* Church, by apoſtatiſing from the Word of God to the Commandments of Men!" It is urged alſo as another Reaſon, why *Mahometiſm* has been preferred to *Chriſtianity*, that the Doctrines of the latter are of a more *Spiritual* nature, requiring greater *Purity* in our Practice: but this argument can be of little or no force, when the Doctrines of *Abſolutions* and *Indulgences* are taken into the queſtion. But I ſhall not anticipate here any farther what will be more fully conſidered in another Work(*z*).

It is certain Fact; that, while the *Chriſtians* were employed in perſecuting one another, becauſe they could not agree in their inquiries into the metaphyſical nature of Almighty God; and the ſolution of the above Difficulties, and many others of their own invention, which had

(*x*) *Greek* and *Armenian* Churches, p. 15. (*y*) Ibid. p. 22. (*z*) The VIIIth Letter.

filled

filled the Church with unintelligible and contradictory notions; the *Mahometans*, by preaching up the plain Doctrine of the *Unity*, as it was revealed by *Moſes*; [that God is One, and One only;] drew over, merely by the force of this one plain Truth, almoſt all *Aſia* and *Africa* to the profeſſion of their Religion.

I know, ſays the Author of Reflections on *Mahometiſm*; that it is commonly ſaid, the Religion of *Mahomet* was eſtabliſhed by force of Arms; and doing violence to people's Conſciences. But this violence was not ſuch as is commonly repreſented (*a*); and was not uſed, for the firſt twelve years; nor till after perſuaſion had gained him a ſtrong party to ſupport his pretenſions. Till that time he had propagated his Religion by fair means; ſo that the whole Succeſs of his enterprize, before his flight to *Medina*, muſt be attributed, as Mr. *Sale* obſerves, to Perſuaſion; and not to Compulſion (*b*): agreeably to what he declares in the *Koran*, *Let there be no violence in Religion* (*c*); though he afterwards practiſed it, following the example of the *Chriſtians*; who uſed the ſame method to propagate, not only the *Homöouſian* Doctrine; but alſo the genuine Apoſtolic Faith, which is generally miſrepreſented under the name of *Arianiſm*; though held in the Church

(*a*) Four Treatiſes, p. 170. (*b*) *Sale's Koran*, 48, 49. (*c*) Ibid. ch. ii. p. 31.

long

long before *Arius* was born.—Beſides, we find; that ſome *Tartarian* Princes, inſtructed firſt by the *Armenians*, and afterwards by the Monks, embraced the *Chriſtian* Religion; but in a very little time rejected it, and became *Mahometans*. And the King of *Macaſſar* in the great *Celebe* Iſland, being inſtructed by the Monks and Doctors of the *Mahometan* Law, preferred *Mahometiſm* to the *Romiſh* Religion(*d*). And, in 1246, Pope *Innocent* IV ſent an Embaſſy to *Bati*, Cham of *Tartary*; inviting him to the *Chriſtian* Religion: but when the Cham heard the chief points of the *Chriſtian* Faith, the Trinity, Incarnation, Tranſubſtantiation, &c. he thanked the Pope for his kindneſs, and promiſed to make no incurſion into the *Chriſtian* Countries for five years; but withall declared himſelf not well ſatisfied with *Chriſtianity*, as it was repreſented to him: and immediately after, the *Saracens* ſent a like Embaſſage to *Bati*; recommending to him *Mahometiſm*, as the more plauſible Sect; and the whole nation of the *Tartars*, ſubmitted to *Mahometiſm*; in which they continue to this day(*e*). And Mr. *Morgan*, in his hiſtory of *Barbary*, which makes the ſame obſervation with regard to the *Africans*; that they were not reduced from *Paganiſm*, by mere force of Arms; but becauſe they liked the meaſures taken by

(*d*) Four Treatiſes, p. 169. (*e*) Unit. Tracts, vol. II. p. 19.

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the *Saracens* to make them relinquiſh their Idolatry, better than any Arguments the *Chriſtians* could invent (*f*): and there can be no wonder at this; when we conſider, that the *Chriſtians* were guilty of Idolatry themſelves. "I will not here queſtion, ſays Mr. *Mede*, whether the *Chriſtian* or *Mahometan* be the greater Idolater; though the doubt might ſoon be reſolved: ſeeing it is well known, that the *Mahometans* worſhip no Images(*g*)." The *Saracens*, ſays the ſame learned Author, who ſpoiled and ſubdued ſo great a part of *Chriſt*'s Church; were never heard of, till ſix hundred years after *Chriſt*: even at the time when *Chriſtians* began generally to fall to Idolatry, and to worſhip Images, Saints, and Angels. Then God firſt gave Us over to ſerve other Nations; when We began to ſerve other Gods, beſides the Lord our God. And the *Turkiſh* Fury could never be ſtayed from caſting more and more this bondage upon our necks; till the Reformed Churches began to put away their Idols(*h*)."

II. Another reaſon why *Chriſtianity* hath been *loſt* in ſeveral Parts of the World, where it was once received; and not received in others, where it was preached; is the Wickedneſs of the *Chriſtians*, and their continual Animoſities and

(*f*) *Morgan*'s Hiſt of *Barbary*, p. 146, 159, 166.
(*g*) *Joſ. Mede*'s Works, p. 795. (*h*) Ibid. 194.

Pet-

Perſecutions(*i*). *Euſebius*, ſpeaking of the times of *Dioclefian*, ſays; "When the Paſtors of our Church, ſetting aſide the Laws and Rules of their Religion, minded only quarrelling with each other; which produced nothing but reproaches, threats, emulations, hatred, and ſeparations; while each moſt eagerly contended for Rule and Pre-eminence; then, according to the ſaying of *Jeremiah*, "the Lord in his diſpleaſure darkened the daughter of *Zion*: and caſt down from Heaven the Glory of *Iſrael*—by the Subverſion of the Churches(*k*)." And ſo in *Africa* we are told by good Authority, that the *Chriſtians* owed their ruin to themſelves; and what made the *African Moors* ſo paſſive, and ready to fall-in with the *Mahometans*, was "the hope of ridding themſelves of their greateſt eyeſore; the imperious, impiouſly vicious, inſatiably avaricious, and conſequently inſufferably tyrannical *Chriſtians*(*l*)." And even with regard to Perſecution for Conſcience-ſake, the ſame ſcene of Abomination, which was begun in *Aſia*, was acted over in *Africa*; with the ſame Succeſs. The Authority of perſecuting to Blood, was procured from the Emperor *Honorius*; by four Biſhops ſent from *Carthage* to that purpoſe. A. C. 410. and his Edicts comprehended all Diſſenters, who departed ever ſo little, *vel levi ar-*

(*i*) Letter I. p. 12, &c. (*k*) Eccleſ. Hiſt. B. viii. ch. 1. (*l*) *Morgan*, as above.

gumento, from the eſtabliſhed Faith(*m*). Thus the *Chriſtians* murthered one another, for difference of Opinion; and were ſeverely puniſhed for all their abominations, by the juſt Judgement of God.

Euſebius conſiders the Perſecution under *Diocleſian*, in that light(*n*). It is unfit, ſays he, for us to record their mutual deviations and folly before the Perſecution. Wherefore we will relate no more concerning them, than whereby we may juſtify the divine vengeance. *Socrates*, ſpeaking of the firſt Perſecution of the *Novatians* at *Rome* by Pope *Innocent*, obſerves; that at the ſame inſtant the *Goths* invaded *Italy*, and became the Lords of all(*o*). And, about ſeventeen years after the Biſhops of Carthage had procured the perſecuting Edict from *Honorius*, the country was invaded by the *Vandals* under *Genſeric*; where the *Chriſtians* had more than 700 Biſhopricks; and about five millions of Men were deſtroyed: ſo that *Procopius* obſerves, it was next to a Miracle to ſee a Man. And afterwards, when the *Saracens* became the maſters of *Africa*, they aſſerted the ſame power over the Conſciences of the *Chriſtians*, which the *Chriſtians* with no more right or juſtice had exerciſed before, over one another; and thoſe

(*m*) Sir *Iſaac Newton* on the Propheſies, p. 298.
(*n*) *Euſeb.* Eccleſ. Hiſt. Book viii. chap. 2.
(*o*) *Taylor*'s Lib. of Proph. Ded. 25.

who

who would not immediately become *Mahometans*, were either killed or baniſhed. And indeed, with what appearance of Reaſon could it be expected; that the juſt Judgements of God ſhould fall upon the *Heathens*, for perſecuting the *Chriſtians*; and yet that the *Chriſtians* ſhould eſcape them, when they murthered one another? When any thing happened unfortunately at *Rome*, in the days of *Nero*, &c. the immediate cry was, to burn the *Chriſtians*: and did not the *Chriſtians* act upon the very ſame Principle, when *Neſtorius* declared to the Emperor *Theodoſius*; "clear me the Earth of Hereticks; and "I will in return give you the Kingdom of "Heaven: aſſiſt Me to deſtroy the Hereticks; "and I will aſſiſt You to deſtroy the *Perſians*?" And what was the Conſequence of this diabolical Practiſe afterwards in the days of *Juſtinian*; but the deſolation of whole Provinces? Thus the Sceptre of *Chriſt* was proved to be a Sceptre of Righteouſneſs under the *Chriſtian* diſpenſation; as it had been in former ages, when he deſtroyed *our* Church and Nation(*p*). For though in his Love and his Pity he redeemed them; yet, when they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, he turned to be their Enemy; and fought againſt them(*q*). Theſe were the natural Effects of that Apoſtaſy from the Word of God to

(*p*) See Letter II. p. 303. (*q*) *Iſ.* lxiii. 9. 10.

the Commandments of Men; which ſtill continues, more or leſs, in all the *Chriſtian* Churches: and God Almighty hath juſtly plagued them with their own inventions, as he did our Fathers. And, as theſe things have ariſen entirely from the *Chriſtians* themſelves; in oppoſition to the Precepts, and the very Nature of the Goſpel; it could never be expected, that the Bleſſing of God ſhould attend either the Men or the Doctrines which they taught; any farther than it has done. Their *Ruin* was the Conſequence of their *Apoſtaſy*. And, if what the Biſhop of *Glouceſter* has advanced, be admitted as a Truth by the Governors of the *Chriſtian* Churches; that the true End, for which Religion is eſtabliſhed, is not to provide for *Truth*, but for *civil Utility* (*r*); it is not likely, that *Chriſtianity* will make any farther progreſs ſoon; but rather be more corrupted, than it now is: and eſpecially, if once the Governors of the Church ſhall take upon them to *define Hereſy more ſtrictly*; *and the Officers of the Church ſhall have power to cenſure Hereticks, though not extirpate*; which Sir *William Blackſtone* ſeems to imagine neceſſary for the Support of a national Religion(*s*). For though theſe Officers may not *begin* their Cenſures with Extirpation; yet, as ſurely as ever the Practiſe of defining Hereſy, and cenſuring

(*r*) *Alliance*, p. 254.

(*s*) See his IVth Vol.

Heretics,

Heretics, is revived; ſo ſurely the Politicians will drive the nail that will go; and uſe the *civil* Arm, in ſupport of their *own Decrees*; let them be ever ſo *abſurd*, or ever ſo *ſubverſive* of the true *Chriſtian* Doctrines; and nothing better can be expected to be the Conſequence of defining Hereſies by *civil* Utility, without regard to *Chriſtianity* and *Truth*; than the eſtabliſhment of the Doctrines of Men, in oppoſition to the Word of God. And yet, notwithſtanding all this, when we conſider that the preſent ſtate of things, and a much worſe than the preſent, hath been long ago foretold; and is expected both by Proteſtants and Papiſts (*t*);

(*t*) *Suarez* Def. Fid. Cath. l. v. c. 21. Non eſt incredibile, *Romam* prope *Antichriſti* tempora ita afflictam, ut quaſi in Angulo, vel in Cavernis Terræ deliteſcat. See *Rhem.* Annot. on *Theſſ.* ii. 2. lect. 6. And ſome learned *Proteſtants* have concluded from the Propheſies; "that the face of Proteſtantiſm will become once more covered with as foul a Corruption, as was ever that of Popery; before the happy Liberty and Light of the Goſpel ſhall take place." "God Almighty having ever uſed to uſher in any great Exaltation of his Saints with ſome deſperate Extremity and Calamity immediately foregoing it." And it ſeems by the Propheſies, that the witneſſes or preachers of the true Faith, ſhall be to all appearance entirely overcome and put to ſilence; before the Kingdoms of this World become the Kingdoms of Chriſt. See *Rev.* xi. 7, &c. *Cudworth*, p. 601, 980. Sir *Iſaac Newton* on the Propheſies, 250.

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the ſmall extent of genuine *Chriſtianity* at preſent, and the ſmall Progreſs it has made in the World, under the arbitrary decrees of Synods and Councils; or is likely to make under ſuch Eſtabliſhments, as do not provide for the Truth, but merely for *civil* Utility; can by no means be looked-upon by an Adverſary, who is not a mere Bigot to *Deiſm*, as any real and ſubſtantial Objection to *Chriſtianity* itſelf.

I have now completed what I deſigned to lay before you, as my Apology for embracing *Chriſtianity*; by ſhewing it to be a Revelation conſiſtent with the Nature of God to give, and with that of Man to receive; and agreeable to the Revelation given to our Fathers. And from the whole there ſeems to ariſe one plain, rational, conſiſtent, and benevolent Syſtem of God's moral Government over the affairs of Men, carried-on from the beginning to the end, by the miniſtration of the Angel of the Covenant; who led our Fathers through the Wilderneſs—But it ſtill remains to be examined; whether this Syſtem of Religion be the *true* one. For the Deiſts will urge; that *natural* Religion is a rational, conſiſtent, and benevolent Syſtem, as well as *Chriſtianity*; and not ſubject to ſo many Difficulties: in which aſſertion they muſt be allowed to ſpeak the Truth. For *Chriſtianity* muſt, in the very Nature of it, be ſubject to the greater number of Difficulties; becauſe it extends our

view

view to many more particulars in the divine Government, which it is our Intereſt to be acquainted with; and many intricacies in Providence, which it only explains in part: in which caſe it is natural for the ſolution of one Difficulty to introduce another, or ſometimes ſeveral others. We muſt not therefore be affrighted from our Faith, merely upon account of the Difficulties we find in it; unleſs they be of ſuch a nature, as to appear Falſities or Abſurdities: for ſuch as ariſe merely from our Ignorance muſt be found in all Syſtems; wherever our Knowledge of things is bounded and we can ſee no farther.

If any one therefore would convert me to *Atheiſm*; he muſt not attempt to do it merely by pointing out the Difficulties, in conſidering the nature of Eternity, and Space, and Creation, and the origin of Evil, &c. but he muſt give me a Solution of all the appearances I obſerve in Nature, leſs liable to objection than *Theiſm*: he muſt ſhew me, that the material, vegetable, and animal Creation, and the Intelligence of Man, and the Government of the whole, are to be accounted for more fully, and philoſophically upon the *hypotheſis* of no Cauſe at all, but Chance or Nature, which are *nonentities*; than from the Superintendence of an intelligent and all-powerful Creator. But this he is not able to do; and therefore I diſcard *Atheiſm*.

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In like manner, if any one would convert me to *Deiſm*; he muſt not only point-out the Difficulties which attend my preſent notion; but he muſt account-for the Exiſtence of *Judaiſm* and *Chriſtianity*, and the Accompliſhment of the Propheſies, and many other things which will come into the queſtion; upon ſuch principles, as are leſs liable to objection, than what I now maintain: and ſhew them to be more fully accounted-for, *without* the ſuppoſition of a Revelation, than *with* it. But he is not able to do this: and therefore I diſcard *Deiſm*.

But it may be worth while to be more particular; and I muſt therefore obſerve, that we have Books; which contain the Civil and Religious Laws of a great Nation, by which they were governed from the earlieſt ages; and which have been looked-upon to be authentic, to the preſent times; diſperſed through all the learned Nations in the World, tranſlated into different Languages, made the particular Study of the Learned for many Centuries, teſtified-of by the Writers of every age, from the days of the Apoſtles; whilſt they continued to be a great and powerful Nation; and we have Propheſies in theſe books, from before the days of *Moſes*; others, from the time of the *Jewiſh* Kings; which we find confirmed by the moſt ancient Heathen Writers of different Nations, to have been punctually fulfilled long time after they were

were given: and other Prophesies of *Christ* and his Apostles: some of all which, both *Jewish* and *Christian*, reach to the present Times; and we see and know them to be accomplished, and the present state of the World manifestly tending to the accomplishment of the rest. All these things must be accounted-for by the *Deist*; as well as the *Christian*. And the question will be; when their different Theories come to be impartially examined, whether is the more probable.

If the *Deist* denies the authenticity of the books; he must give his reasons, *why*, and upon what *grounds*; and account-for the several quotations from them, and references to them, in other books in all ages, from the Apostles to the present times. Or rather he must deny the Authenticity of them all; for there is no book so well attested, as the Scriptures: but this would certainly be a more improbable Tenet; than any thing that is advanced, either by the *Jews* or *Christians*, in favour of a Revelation. On the other side, if he allows the books to be of the Antiquity they pretend; and yet holds the Prophesies in them to be the Inventions of Men; he must then maintain, that the Impostors in the days of *Moses*, and afterwards in the days of *Christ*, were able to foretell, merely by human Conjecture, the future affairs of the *Jews* and *Christians*; the one for above 3000, the

other for more than 1700 years: which is absolutely incredible.

A Man, that would undertake to account for these things upon such principles; would find his Theory liable to much greater Objections, than any that attend the belief of a Revelation. And yet nothing is more common, than to meet with men; who being somehow or other disgusted with *Christianity*, think it sufficient to object against it at *random*; without considering, that the objections they make, oblige them frequently to submit to much greater difficulties than they object to; and, in order to avoid *Christianity*, to lay themselves open sometimes even to *Atheism* itself. The Reason of this Indignation against Religion in general, is thus very honestly given by Mr. *Wollaston*—Among other Prejudices, there is one of a particular nature; which we must observe to have been one of the greatest Causes of modern Irreligion. Whilst some Opinions and Rites are carried to such an immoderate Height, as exposes the Absurdity of them to the view of almost every body, but them who receive them; not only Gentlemen of the *belles Lettres*, but even men of common Sense many times see through them: and then out of indignation and excessive Penitence, not separating what is *true* from that which is *false*, they come to deny *both*; and fall into the contrary extreme, a Contempt of all Religion in general(*u*).

(*u*) *Wollaston*'s Rel. of Nat. Del. §. 3. Art. 16. Obs. 8.

Another

Another Writer, in a book dedicated to the late Lord *Lyttleton*, ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe. "Though the articles of religious Belief, that fall within the comprehenſion of mankind, and ſeem eſſential to their Happineſs, are few and ſimple; yet ingenious men have contrived to erect them into a moſt tremendous Syſtem of metaphyſical Subtlety. The bad conſequences of ſuch Syſtems have been various—Moſt men are bred-up in a belief of the peculiar and diſtinguiſhing opinions of ſome one religious ſect or other. They are taught; that all theſe are founded equally on divine Authority, or the cleareſt deductions of Reaſon. By which means all their Religion hangs ſo much together; that one part of it cannot be ſhaken, without endangering the whole. But, whenever any Freedom of Enquiry is allowed, the Folly of ſome of theſe opinions, and the uncertain Foundation of others, cannot be concealed; and, when this comes to be the caſe, a general Diſtruſt of the whole commonly ſucceeds; with that Lukewarmneſs in Religion, which is its neceſſary Conſequence(*x*). Bp. *Burnet* makes the ſame Obſervation in his Letters.

Theſe are the Reaſons, why *Deiſm* ſo univerſally prevails among men of Senſe in *France*. It is, becauſe their Divines have explained the

(*x*) Comparative view of Men and Animals: 213, 214.

doctrines of *Chriſtianity* in ſuch a manner; as to contradict their notions of natural Religion, which they can demonſtrate; and they reject the whole, rather than admit as a divine Revelation what they know to be falſe, and perhaps blaſphemous.

Another Reaſon, which leads to the ſame end, is; becauſe they find themſelves ſo oppreſſed, and enſlaved, and tyrannized over, by their Eccleſiaſtics. Whereas, if *Chriſtianity* was ſo explained, as to be conſiſtent with the natural notions of Morality, and the attributes of God; and the eccleſiaſtical powers ſo reſtrained, as they are in *England*; all this exceſſive Renitence would ſubſide; and the Men of Literature would be as ready to attend the proofs of the Divinity of the new Teſtament, as of the Authenticity of *Cæſar*'s Commentaries, or *Cicero*'s Orations.

In the mean time, this exceſſive renitence, and contempt of all Religion upon this account, in men who profeſs to think freely, is moſt unbecoming the character of Philoſophers and Scholars: whoſe proper buſineſs it is, in Religion, as well as in every part of Science, to ſeparate Truth from Error; and not to give up both together, becauſe there is ſome Difficulty in the Operation. Beſides, the Difficulty they fear, is chiefly imaginary; for, if they would but give themſelves the trouble to examine

mine without prejudice into the new Teſtament itſelf, they would find, that, with regard to moſt of the Doctrines which they ſtart at, it is as hard a taſk to prove them to be the Doctrines of the new Teſtament; as it would be to defend them, if they were found there.—But it is eaſier to cut the *Gordian* Knot, than to untie it; and totally to give over all Examination, than to enquire into the Merits of the cauſe. However, a Man that does this, is neither to be called a Deiſt, nor a Free-thinker; but merely an idle and thoughtleſs man: of which kind there are many thouſands in this Country, who miſtake themſelves for *Deiſts*.

It may perhaps be aſked, what Encouragement have men to part with their prejudices, and lay themſelves open to a free and impartial Enquiry into theſe matters; when they find, that the more they believe, the more they are enſlaved? To which it may be juſtly anſwered, that their Fears are contrary to Fact: for we find in *England*, and all thoſe countries where any free enquiry has been made into Religion; that the people are leſs enſlaved, and yet the Religion more firmly believed by men of Senſe and Learning. And as a farther encouragement to a fair examination of theſe Subjects, it is well known; that *Chriſtianity* has, by a free enquiry, been already cleared of many monſtrous Errors; with which it was loaded in the days of Ignorance

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and Superſtition: and is every day found to be more conſiſtent with the Underſtanding, as well as the natural Liberties of Mankind.

The caſe was once the ſame with *Philoſophy*; as it is now with *Religion*. The Earth's motion, the plurality of Worlds, and many other notions were looked-upon to be *Heretical*; as Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s Principles are now ſuppoſed to be in Popiſh Countries. But, "when a fair examination was encouraged, Problems, that appeared of inſuperable Difficulty in one age, were reſolved in another; and in a third, in a manner deſpiſed as too ſimple and eaſy (*y*);" and the ſame has been the caſe already in ſome points of Theology. The chief miſtakes in *Philoſophy* aroſe from their Impatience in forming Theories, without conſulting *Nature*; and the chief miſtakes in *Chriſtianity*, from forming Theories, without conſulting *Scripture*. From whence it followed; that the Doctrines to be maintained being often falſe, could only be defended by *Poſtulata* equally indefenſible; and thus Errors increaſed, and ſucceeding Ages miſtaking them for Truth, becauſe they were eſtabliſhed, no one had the Courage to examine into them, whether they were agreeable to the *Scripture* or not; or, if they did, it was dangerous to mention their diſcoveries.

(*y*) *Maclaurin.*

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And ſhould not men of Learning and Candour allow for theſe overſights in *Chriſtianity*, as well as in *Philoſophy*; and endeavour to get clear of their Errors, by the ſame Study and Application; and by recurring to the original *Scripture*, as the Philoſophers recurred to *Nature*? They have certainly the ſame encouraging proſpect of Succeſs; and, as the affair of Religion is of much the greateſt importance, they are inexcuſable if they neglect it; eſpecially, as they muſt thereby deprive themſelves, merely through careleſſneſs and prejudice, of the moſt agreeable and important part of Literature. For nothing ſeems to be an Entertainment more adapted to the nature of Man, than an enlarged contemplation of the divine Wiſdom in the Government of the World; and a diſcovery of the ſecret and amazing Steps of Providence from the beginning to the End of Time. From hence, we may ſee the foundation for that ingenious ſaying, as Mr. de *St. Evremond* calls it, of General *Wurt*'s; that when Men have taken out of *Chriſtianity* what they have once foiſted into it, there will be but one Religion, as plain in it's doctrine, as pure in it's Morals(x).

But ſome Gentlemen, eſpecially thoſe who have converſed much with the *Romaniſts*, will tell us; (and ſome few perhaps believe it;) that

(x) St. *Evrem.* Vol. II. p. 68.

it

it is to no purpoſe, to uſe our Reaſon upon Religious ſubjects: becauſe the Reaſon of man is ſo imperfect, and confined within ſuch narrow bounds. But why then are they afraid, that it ſhould paſs thoſe bounds? And, if this cannot be done; why ſhould they not examine, where thoſe bounds are fixed; and in the mean time uſe their Underſtanding, as far as it will go; and try all things—firſt, whether they are revealed or not; and then, in what ſenſe they are to be underſtood. And, if the queſtion be above their Capacities, and they are not able to find out the true ſenſe of it; they may be ſure that the true ſenſe is not revealed to *them*, nor of any importance to *their* Salvation, nor an Article of *their* Faith. For a Revelation, that leaves us as ignorant as it found us, is to *us* no Revelation at all.

But we are told, that ſome articles of Faith are to be viewed at a diſtance; and looked upon with ſilent Veneration, and religious Awe; and an examination into them by Reaſon is dangerous, becauſe they are *above* our Reaſon.—Do *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles tell us this? No; but the *Romaniſts* do: for Tranſubſtantiation can be believed by no other means; and they would perſuade the Proteſtants, if they could, that they have *credenda* in the Proteſtant Church; which are as contrary to the Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind, as Tranſubſtantiation. And ſome,

who

who miſtake themſelves for *Deiſts*, take it upon their Words; and, in conſequence of it, deny all Revelation in the Groſs.

But let us examine, where this Danger lies; and let us chooſe a queſtion, in which the *Deiſt* is as much concerned as the *Chriſtian*; viz. how the material World could be brought into being, when as yet it was not: or in what manner Creation is performed. This queſtion muſt be allowed by all men to be *above* our Reaſon; and yet we apply to our Reaſon for a Solution of it: but our Reaſon informs us, that we might as well have applied to a brick Wall; that, if we wanted her aſſiſtance, we ſhould have given her ſome *data* to argue from; but that here ſhe can find none; and therefore is not able to move a ſtep forward. And this will be the caſe, in all other queſtions which are above our Reaſon; whether they relate to Nature or Revelation. And, conſequently, the Danger of our reaſoning, in ſuch caſes, is merely imaginary; except we reaſon like Fools, and draw concluſions which will not follow from the Premiſes: and this we may do, in matters that are *level* to the underſtanding; as well as in thoſe that are *above* it.

On the other hand, it ſeems to be abſolutely neceſſary for us to examine, with regard to every ſubject of Importance; whether it be *above* our Reaſon or not: for otherwiſe, we may loſe the Knowledge of many Important Truths; merely

by our Neglect. We may inſtance in the queſtion of Tranſubſtantiation; this is looked-upon by the *Romaniſts* as the greateſt of all Myſteries; and yet we find, upon examination, that it is contrary to Senſe and Reaſon; and conſequently *falſe*. For the very proof that it is contrary to Senſe and Reaſon, which is called *Reductio ad abſurdum*, proves the falſity of a propoſition as effectually in Religious matters, as in the Mathematics: and the credibility of *Chriſtianity* itſelf depends upon this kind of argument. For, if we could believe what is contrary to Senſe and Reaſon; it would be impoſſible to prove the Truth of it.

However, we are told, in anſwer to this; that the *Proteſtants* have their myſteries, as well as the *Papiſts*. 'Tis true: and ſo have the *Deiſts*; in the *true Scripture* ſenſe of the Word *Myſtery*. But why is not a *Myſtery* to be examined into; as well as any other Propoſition? Or how can a *Myſtery* be true, that is contrary to Senſe and Reaſon; any more than any other Propoſition? It is amazingly weak and thoughtleſs in Proteſtants, to talk of the Myſteries of *Chriſtianity* in this manner; as if they were *credenda* contrary to Senſe and Reaſon, or not to be reconciled to them. *Chriſtianity* has no ſuch Myſteries: when the *Deiſts* ſpeak of *Chriſtianity* in this manner, they mean to inculcate, that our *Faith* is *Nonſenſe*: and when the *Papiſts* uſe this

this argument to convert the *Proteſtants*, it is merely to bring them over to the *belief* of Nonſenſe.

It is high time for the Proteſtants to underſtand this Word *Myſtery*, which has been of ſuch infinite Service to *Rome*, in the ſame ſenſe in which it is explained and uſed in Scripture. A *Myſtery*, in the *Popiſh* Senſe of the Word, is a Propoſition inexplicable, contrary to Senſe and Reaſon, and as incomprehenſible after Revelation as it was before: and in this ſenſe it is, in which the *Engliſh*, when they return from travelling through *Popiſh* Countries, generally underſtand it; and apply it, when they come home, to the Religion of *Proteſtants:* and this is another reaſon of their Diſguſt againſt *Chriſtianity* in general. But this ſenſe of the Word *Myſtery* is ſo far from the true *one*; that it will not agree with any one Text in the New Teſtament.

For your Satisfaction upon this Subject, which is of great Importance, I ſhall examine every Text we find there; in which the word *Myſtery* is uſed.

Chriſt tells his Diſciples; to You it is given to know the *Myſtery* of the Kingdom of God: and accordingly he explains to them the parable of the Sower. (*Mar.* iv. 11. *Lu.* viii. 10. *Mat.* xiii. 11.)—St. *Paul* ſays to the *Romans*; I would not, Brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of

this *Myſtery*; viz. that Blindneſs had happened to *Iſrael* in part, till the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* be come-in. (*Ro.* xi. 25.)—And to the *Corinthians* he ſays; I ſhew you a *Myſtery*, we ſhall not all ſleep; but we ſhall all be changed. (I *Cor.* xv. 51.)—And we are told, (*Eph.* i. 9, 10.) that God hath made known to us the *Myſtery* of his Will; viz. that he will gather together in one, all things in *Chriſt*; as it is explained in the next verſe.—And ſo the *Myſtery* is *explained*, (*Eph.* iii. 3.) that the *Gentiles* ſhould be joint Heirs with the *Jews*; and St. *Paul explains* the *Myſtery* which he ſpeaks of; (*Eph.* v. 19.)—We ſee from hence; that every particular of the *Chriſtian* Doctrine, which was not known before, is called a *Myſtery*: and the whole Revelation, when taken together, is called by the ſame name. The Goſpel is therefore ſaid to be the Wiſdom of God in a *Myſtery*; (I *Cor.* ii. 7.) and the partaking of it, the fellowſhip of the *Myſtery*; (*Eph.* iii. 9.) and it was the knowledge of this *Myſtery*, which was made known to St. *Paul*; (*Eph.* iii. 3.) which the *Epheſians* were to *underſtand*, (verſe 4.) and which he was to make *known*: (*Eph.* vi. 19.)—Hence we ſee; that the *Myſtery* of the Goſpel was the Doctrine of the Goſpel: a Doctrine, that was preached; and a *Myſtery*, that was made *manifeſt*, and *explained*. (*Col.* i. 26, 27. iv. 3.)—And this was the *Myſtery* of *Chriſt*, (*Eph.* i. 4.) and the *Myſtery* of Faith,

Faith, (I *Tim.* iii. 9.) and the *Myſtery* of Godlineſs, (I *Tim.* i. 16.) and the *Myſteries*, of which the Apoſtles were Stewards; (I *Cor.* iv. 1.)—And the ſame word is uſed on things not yet explained, but to be explained *immediately:* as the *Myſtery* of the Seven Stars, (*Rev.* i. 20.) or, of what is to be explained *hereafter*; as the *Myſtery* of Iniquity, which then began to work. (II *Theſſ.* ii. 7.)—And the *Myſtery* of God which is to be finiſhed, is the method of his Government. (*Rev.* x. 7.)—And St. *Paul* ſpeaks of *underſtanding* all *Myſteries*, (I *Cor.* xiii. 2.) and declares his deſire for the *Coloſſians*, &c. that they may have full aſſurance of *Underſtanding*, to the acknowledgement of the *Myſteries* of God: (*Col.* ii. 2.) ſo that the *Myſteries* he preached were to be acknowledged by the *Underſtanding*; —and he that ſpake in an unknown Tongue is ſaid to ſpeak *Myſteries*; merely for want of an Interpreter (I *Cor.* xiv. 2.)

From all which it appears; that the word *Myſtery* in the new Teſtament, means nothing more than a *Secret*; or a thing not underſtood. And in the ſame manner, as the word *Secret* is ſtill made uſe of, after it is divulged; (as when we ſay, the *Secret* is well known;) ſo the word *Myſtery* is uſed to ſignify the Doctrines of the Goſpel, even after they had been publickly taught and explained: and, conſequently, if we muſt not ſearch into *Myſteries*, we muſt not endea-

endeavour to underſtand the Goſpel; and if ſo to what purpoſe was the Revelation made? The only place in the new Teſtament, where it can be underſtood to mean an unintelligible Doctrine, is in the *Revelation* (xvii, 15.) where we are told, that upon the forehead of the Woman who ſat upon the ſcarlet-coloured Beaſt full of names of Blaſphemy, was written *Myſtery, Babylon*, the mother of Harlots, and abominations of the Earth; a proper Ornament enough for *Her*, but very inconſiſtent with the Faith of a *Proteſtant* Church. Upon the whole, there is not a ſingle Text in the new Teſtament; which even intimates to us, that a *Myſtery* is an improper ſubject for Examination; or above our Comprehenſion.

The Religion of *Proteſtants*, on the contrary, is founded upon plain and intelligible Principles: and adapted to the Underſtanding of all men, as far as the *Belief* of it is neceſſary to their Salvation. Aud to imagine it a requiſite in any one to believe the obſcure parts of it more *explicitly*, than they are *explicitly* revealed and *clearly* explained in Scripture; is as abſurd, as it is to ſuppoſe that no man can have a ſaving Faith in God, and believe that he is, and that he created the World, and governs it; without an explicit notion of neceſſary Exiſtence and Creation, and the origin of Evil, and laws of the Planetary Syſtem.

It

It is the pretending to know more of *Chriſtianity*, than God has revealed; and to explain *authoritatively*, what the Scripture has not given us ſufficient *data* to underſtand with certainty and preciſion; that has cauſed all the Errors and Animoſities in the *Chriſtian* Church: whereas, if men would be content to be ignorant; where they really are ſo, and God intended that they ſhould be ſo; there would be more *Chriſtianity* in the World, as Dr. *Whitchcote* has obſerved; and leſs Controverſy(*a*).

As the Doctrines of *Chriſtianity* are all of them intelligible to every individual; as far as is neceſſary to be believed by every individual, in order to his Salvation: ſo are the Arguments, by which the Credibility of the Revelation is to be proved, plain and intelligible to a very low capacity. And theſe I ſhall proceed to lay before you, as clearly as I can, in the following Propoſitions.

1. When a Being, infinitely happy in himſelf, creates a number of moral Agents, from whom he can receive no Benefit; there can be no other Reaſon given, for ſuch a Creation, but his *Benevolence*: He does not create them for his *own* Happineſs; but *theirs*. And as moral Perfection is neceſſary, not only for the Happineſs of Society, but for that of every individual moral Agent; it follows, that moral

(*a*) See the Motto on Letter VI.

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Perfection muſt be one end for which they were created; and for the attaining of which he endued them with Underſtanding to judge of moral Obligation.

2. As the moral Perfection of men, and their mutual Happineſs, depends ſo greatly upon right notions of the moral Perfections of God, and his Government over them by the diſpenſation of Rewards and Puniſhments, according to their Works; it is not *improbable*, that, if at any time the knowledge of his Perfections ſhould be in danger of being utterly and univerſally depraved and loſt in the World, he would by ſome means or other prevent it; and inform them, that they were *his* Creatures, and accountable to him for their Actions; and that he would be a Rewarder of ſuch, as ſhould diligently ſeek him.

3. If it ſhould pleaſe God to *reveal* ſuch things to any part of Mankind; it is *probable*, that he would do it in ſuch a manner; as would be proper to convince both his Meſſenger, and thoſe to whom he ſhould ſend him, that the Revelation came from *him*.

4. To convince the Meſſenger, that the Revelation came from him; and was not a mere Fancy, or Imagination, or idle Dream; it is *probable*, that he would aſſure him by *ſome external appearance* or *action ſuperior to the power of Man*, which he could not be miſtaken in; that

he

he received Aſſiſtance from, and had Communication with, that Being ſuperior to Man, in whoſe name he was to ſpeak: and ſuch exertion of Power would be called *miraculous*. The Reaſon why I ſay it is *probable* that God would take ſuch a method to convince him, is; becauſe I can conceive no way, by which God can prove himſelf ſuperior to Man; but by the performance of ſome Action, or (which I include in the word *Action*) the manifeſting ſome Knowledge, *beyond the power of Man*(*b*). And

5. To convince Mankind of the Divinity of the Meſſage he was to reveal to them; it is *probable*, that God would furniſh the Meſſenger with ſuch Credentials; as ſhould *convince thoſe*, to whom he preached, of his *divine* Miſſion: and would not expect, that his Meſſenger's word ſhould be believed, without ſuch Atteſtation. And conſequently it is *probable*, that he would *ſupply him* with *power* to prove his Aſſiſtance from, and Communication with, that Superior Being, in whoſe name he ſpake. And

(*b*) Phœnix, Vol. II. p. 250.

George Duke of Buckingham obſerves, that Demonſtration in matters of Faith is abſolutely unneceſſary; becauſe, if I can convince a man, that the notions I maintain are more likely to be true, than falſe; it is not in his power not to believe them: and belief is all that is required of us in the ſpeculative part of Religion. See the Note, Letter IV. p. 482.

this power muſt alſo be above the power of Man; *i. e. miraculous.*

6. And, if God ſhould alſo deſign this Revelation for the uſe of ſucceeding generations; it is *probable*, that he would ſupply his Meſſenger with ſuch farther Evidence of his divine Miſſion; as ſhould be ſufficient to convince *ſucceeding Generations:* and this might be done, by impowering him to foretell *future* Events; upon the accompliſhment of which, *future* Ages would be convinced of the divine Miſſion of his Meſſenger; as well as the Generation he preached to. It is not therefore *improbable*, that he might endow his Miniſter with the Spirit of *Propheſy.*

From hence we may collect thus much; that there is nothing *improbable* in the Suppoſition, that God might *reveal* his Will to Mankind; and, in that caſe, would confirm and eſtabliſh his Revelation by *Miracles* and *Propheſies.* Nay farther, if it cannot be ſhewn to be *improbable*, that God ſhould reveal his Will to Mankind; the *Miracles* and *Propheſies* will be ſo far from *improbable*; that, according to our notions of *Evidence* and *Proof*, they will be abſolutely *neceſſary* to that end. And, conſequently, the whole Improbability of Miracles and Propheſy cannot poſſibly be greater; than the Improbability that *God ſhould reveal his Will to Man:* for, if *that* be probable, Miracles will be not only

only probable, but neceſſary.—So that the queſtion regarding the Probability of Miracles and Propheſy *a priori* between the *Deiſt* and the *Chriſtian*, will be reduced to this one point; Whether it is *probable* or *improbable*, that God ſhould reveal his Will to Man; in order to prevent the knowledge of his moral Perfections and Government, and Superintendency over the affairs of Men, from being entirely obliterated and forgotten(*c*).

Having ſhewn it to be *probable*, that God might reveal his Will to Mankind, and confirm and eſtabliſh his Revelations by Miracles and

(*c*) Mr. *Hume* has laid it down for a truth, "that no "teſtimony is ſufficient to eſtabliſh [the belief of] a mi-"racle, unleſs the falſhood [viz. of the evidence] be more "miraculous than the fact it endeavours to eſtabliſh."—Upon which I obſerve, that to ſpeak of the truth or falſity of a man's Evidence, as being *miraculous* only miſleads and deceives. A man's Evidence may be credible, or incredible; probable, or improbable: but there can be nothing miraculous in his giving a true or a falſe evidence; it is *in his own power* to do which he pleaſes. I ſhall therefore venture to expreſs Mr. *Hume*'s aſſertion in other words, viz. No teſtimony is ſufficient to eſtabliſh the belief of a miracle, unleſs the teſtimony to the miracle be more credible than the miracle atteſted-to, is improbable and incredible. And here I ſhall obſerve two things before I examine this aſſertion, 1ſt. that a miracle is an act performed by ſome Being ſuperior to man, and capable of performing it. And 2d. that it has been here proved that the interpoſition of ſuch a Being is probable.

Propheſies; I ſhall now proceed to prove the *Fact*: and, out of many Propheſies which might be choſen to argue from, I ſhall ſelect *two* of the moſt extraordinary ones; which we know to be accompliſhed, and which are impoſſible to have been foreknown by human reaſon and conjecture; and highly *improbable* in themſelves: the former of which is foretold by *Moſes* and the Prophets, from above 3000 years ago; and the latter by the Apoſtles of *Jeſus Chriſt*, from above 1700. Upon which I argue as follows;

I. If *Moſes* and the Apoſtles could, and actually did, declare ſo long ago, what ſhould come to paſs in the future ages of the World; and this ſo plainly and expreſsly, as to be level to a common Underſtanding (*d*); and if we at this diſtance of time ſee, and know theſe Propheſies (impoſſible to be collected by human conjecture, and improbable in themſelves;) to be actually compleated: What muſt we conclude; but that the Prophets, who foretold theſe things, had their Knowledge of them from the Supreme Being, who governs all things as he pleaſes; or from one, who was inſtructed by *him* in what manner he deſigned that things ſhould be, at thoſe ſeveral diſtances of time(*e*).

(*d*) See Dr. *Sam. Clarke's* Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Rel. Edit. vii. p. 425, where he ſpecifies the Propheſies relative to *Babylon*, *Egypt*, *Tyre*, and many others.

(*e*) For this Argument ſee Dr. *Sykes*, on Miracles: the Author ſometimes uſes his very words.

For

For my own part; when I read over the Writings of *Moſes*, and the Prophets, relating to our *Diſperſion* (*f*); that we ſhall be ſifted and ſcattered into all Nations, and become a Proverb and a Reproach; and yet continue a *ſeparate* People, capable of being gathered together again, even in the latter days (*g*); whereas all the nations of the world, who ſpoiled us, are utterly deſtroyed; as our Prophets long ago foretold (*b*): I cannot avoid concluding; that a Fact, ſo improbable in itſelf, and ſo contrary to what hath ever happened to any other nation in the World, could be foreknown by no one; who had not an intercourſe by Inſpiration with the God of the Univerſe: and the ſame Concluſion follows from the Propheſies of the old and new Teſtament, which gives us the particular Circumſtances and Doctrines of the grand *Apoſtaſy*, and of the riſe and grandeur, and tyranny of the *Roman* Church; all which we know to have been punctually accompliſhed.

The prophet *Daniel* declares to *Nebuchadnezzar*, under the ſimilitude of an Image (*i*); that after Him ſhould ariſe a Kingdom inferior to *his*, and a third, and a fourth; and this *fourth* Kingdom ſhould be divided into ſeveral;

(*f*) See Dr. *Sam. Clarke*'s Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Rel. Edit. vii. p. 431.

(*g*) *Deut.* xxx. 3. (*b*) *Jer.* xxx. 11. *Amos*, ix. 8.

(*i*) *Dan.* ii.

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ſome of which ſhould be ſtrong, and others weak; and that, during this *fourth*, a Kingdom ſhould be erected by the God of Heaven which ſhould never be deſtroyed(*k*).

And in the ſeventh chapter he gives us the ſame Propheſy, under the ſimilitude of *four* Beaſts; which he explains to mean Kingdoms: (verſe 17.) during the laſt of which, *ten* Horns or Kingdoms ſhould ariſe out of it; *one* of which ſhould ariſe different from the reſt, which ſhould ſubdue *three* of them.—

Now it is manifeſt, from the Hiſtory of the World; that *four* great Monarchies did actually ſucceed one another, as it is here foretold: That, in the laſt of theſe, the Kingdom of *Chriſt* was erected; which will laſt *for ever*: That, this *fourth* Kingdom has been divided into *ten*, ſome weak and ſome ſtrong; and that from among theſe the Pontiffs of *Rome* are riſen, different from all the other Powers; and have ſubdued *three* of them: *viz.* the Exarchate of *Ravenna* in 755, the Kingdom of the *Lombards* in 773, and the Dukedom of *Rome* in 796; by which means the Biſhop of *Rome* acquired *Peter's* Patrimony, and became a temporal Prince, and wears a *triple* Crown. But this Power, ſo fatal to *Chriſtianity*, is more particularly deſcribed by the *Chriſtians*. St. *John* ſpeaks of him as *Antichriſt*; and at other times as a *Harlot* or Apoſta-

(*k*) *Dan.* ii. 44.

tized

tized Church(*l*), having her Reſidence at *Rome*, ſitting on the *Roman* throne(*m*), and reigning over the Kings of the Earth, into which the *Roman* Empire was broken, who gave her their Kingdom and Power and Strength(*n*), and as branded in the forehead with the name *Myſtery, Babylon*, the mother of Harlots, and abominations of the Earth(*o*). And the Apoſtle ſaw her (that is, the *Chriſtian* Church) drunken with the blood of the Martyrs of *Jeſus*; and when he ſaw her, he wondered with great admiration (*p*): *viz.* to ſee the *Chriſtian* Church drunken with the blood of *Chriſtians*.

Now when I look into Hiſtory; and find this Character, ſtrange as it is, fulfilled in the *Roman* Church; nay, ſee the completion of theſe Propheſies before my Eyes: I cannot have the leaſt doubt, but that the Prophets, who foretold them, were inſtructed and inſpired by God. For nothing that ever happen'd in the World can be more amazing, to us who look backward; or could have appeared more improbable to the Apoſtles, when they looked forward; than what is here foretold, and has actually happened, in conſequence of the Apoſtaſy from the Word of God to the Commandments of Men, (from which no *Chriſtian* Church in the World is yet clear;) that the *Chriſtian* Saints

(*l*) *Rev.* xvii. 5. (*m*) ver. 18. (*n*) ver. 13. (*o*) ver. 5. (*p*) ver. 6.

and

and Martyrs ſhould be perſecuted by the Rulers of the *Chriſtian* Church; and the moſt Religious and Learned among them, the great Patrons and Defenders of the Faith, the Sufferers and Martyrs for the Truth, ſhould introduce into the *Chriſtian* Church thoſe very Errors, which the Apoſtles foretold in direct words to be the doctrines of the Apoſtaſy; as the forbidding to marry, and abſtaining from meats; and thoſe Errors, which *Chriſt* came into the World to put an end to; ſuch as Idolatry, and the Worſhip of the dead; and ſhould not ſcruple to murther one another, as He had foretold, out of a notion of doing God good Service; and ſhould raiſe-up a Power to ſit in the Temple of God, as St. *Paul* had foretold, ſuperior to the Emperor, and all that is called God; and deſtructive to the Authority of *Chriſt* himſelf: and that not only the vulgar and ignorant, but the noble and learned, through all the Kingdoms into which the *Roman* Empire is divided; and all their Kings and Emperors, for many generations; and almoſt every individual in their Kingdoms, ſhould patiently ſubmit to take his yoke upon them; and to bend the knee before him—If theſe things can hardly be conceived to be poſſible, even at this time of day, though known by undeniable Hiſtory; and the power of the *Roman* Pontiffs ſtill remains; How was it poſſible, that the Apoſtles

ſhould

ſhould ever think of framing ſuch a Propheſy, without the divine Aſſiſtance(*q*).

Theſe Propheſies therefore, I conclude to be certain proofs of a Power ſuperior to Man, aſſiſting thoſe who are ſaid to have performed the Miracles recorded in the old and new Teſtaments: ſuch as can leave no doubt upon an unprejudiced mind, that there muſt have been an intercourſe between God and Man by *Propheſy*; and no conjectural Objections can be of force

(*q*) It is agreed, by Proteſtants and Papiſts; that the Beaſt here ſpoken-of in the Apocalypſe ſignifies *Rome*. But the *Romaniſts*, with *Boſſuet* Bp. of *Meaux* at their head, ſay; that it ſignifies *Rome Pagan*: and ſo ſay ſome *Proteſtants*. But the contrary will appear very clear; from the following Conſiderations.

1. The Beaſt which St. *John* ſaw, was *about* to ariſe; and was not then 'riſen: ch. xvii. 8. but *Pagan Rome* was then in its height.

2. St. *John* was ſeized with Aſtoniſhment, upon ſeeing Her (the great Whore) drunk with the blood of the Saints: and nothing could be more ſurprizing; if ſpoken of *Chriſtian Rome*: but it could be no ſurprize in *Heathen Rome*; after he had ſeen the Perſecutions of *Nero* and *Domitian*. ch. xvii. 6.

3. Power was given to the Beaſt to continue 1260 years; but it does not appear, that *Pagan* Religion continued in *Rome* 400 years after the Revelation.

4. The ten Horns are ten Kingdoms; which were to receive Power with the Beaſt μίαν ὥραν· but nothing analagous to this ever happened in *Pagan Rome*. See Critical Notes on ſome paſſages in Scripture; aſcribed to Mr. *Mann*.

ſufficient to be urged againſt ſuch plain and poſitive Proof—And from hence I argue—

II. The Certainty of an intercourſe between God and Man by *Propheſy*, takes-off all the improbability from the Miracles; ſaid to be performed by the ſame perſons, in proof of the Revelation they were about to eſtabliſh and confirm; and all Suſpicion of Falſhood from the Hiſtorians who have related their actions. For he, who is certain from the completion of *Propheſy*; that the Prophets were aſſiſted by a divine power to foretell things, which were impoſſible to be collected by human conjecture, and depended entirely upon the will of God; can have no reaſon to doubt, but that the ſame Being would alſo aſſiſt them in the *miraculous* works; which were equally neceſſary to promote the ſame end. The *Miracles* being deſigned to aſcertain the divinity of the Revelation in the firſt age of its promulgation, to thoſe that beheld them; and the Propheſies deſigned to aſcertain the ſame Truth to ſuch, as could not be preſent to ſee the proof by Miracles; but lived ſome time, perhaps ſome ages, after. It is therefore highly *probable*; even without the evidence of Hiſtory, and prior to the conſideration of it; that the ſame Perſons, who were endowed with the power of *Propheſy*, were alſo endowed with the power of working *Miracles*: So that we have not only *no reaſon* to ſuſpect the credit

credit of the Hiſtorian who ſhould relate ſuch fact, any more than we have to doubt of any other action he relates; but we have a reaſon *a priori*, from the nature of the thing, to *believe* ſuch perſons to be endowed with miraculous powers; and to *expect* to meet with accounts of ſuch facts in the Hiſtorians who undertake to relate their actions.

If it be therefore demanded; why we *believe* the Miracles of the new Teſtament to have been performed by thoſe, to whom they are aſcribed? it is ſufficient to anſwer—becauſe we know, *by the completion of their Propheſies*, that they were aſſiſted by a Being able to perform them; in whoſe work they were employed: which will render thoſe facts *probable*; which would be *improbable*, if related of any *other* Being, not ſo aſſiſted: and what would be in the general *incredible*, is in this particular caſe moſt reaſonable to *expect*; and abſurd to *diſbelieve*. Add to this the Integrity of the Witneſſes; their having no intereſt to ſerve, and their ſacrificing their Lives to their Evidence; and a ſtronger proof will appear for theſe uncommon facts, than for any other occurrences that were ever atteſted from the beginning of the World(*r*). Hence I argue, that the Propheſies of *Moſes*, concerning the State of the *Jews*; prove, by their completion,

(*r*) See Dr. *Sam. Clarke*'s Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Rel. p. 438, &c.

that *Moſes*, had an intercourſe with God; and thereby render probable the account of his Miracles, and the reſt of his Hiſtory, againſt the Objections of the *Deiſts*; and the completion of the Propheſies of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, proves their intercourſe with God; and thereby gives credit to all the reſt of the Evangelical Hiſtory againſt both *Jews* and *Deiſts*. And the Completion of the *Jewiſh* Propheſies in the Perſon of *Chriſt*, connects the chain of Evidence for the Truth of Revelation from the times of *Moſes* to the preſent age. And the preſent ſtate of things, which were propheſied of ſo many ages ago, agreeing with the Propheſies which were then given, is a ſtanding Miracle, which we know to be true; and this is the foundation upon which our Belief of all the reſt is built. So that our Faith in both the Revelations, is reſted upon Truth, and Fact, and Certainty.

III. The Credibility of the Miracles in queſtion, renders probable the Truth of the Doctrines they are brought to prove.

Mr. *Chubb*, after trifling upon this queſtion for ten pages, in which he ſeems more *deſirous* of raiſing difficulties, than *capable* of it; concludes very juſtly, as follows.

" Nevertheleſs, I think, it muſt be allowed; " at leaſt, it is readily allowed by me; that, " though there be no ſuch Connexion betwixt " *Power* and *Truth*, as that one is a *neceſſary at-*

" *tendant*

" *tendant* on the other: and though Miracles " cannot alter the Nature of things; cannot " make a falſe propoſition true: yet I think, " when it plainly appears, that miraculous " Power is, or has been, exerted; the exertion " of ſuch power calls for our moſt ſerious at- " tention and regard; and, if any Doctrine has " been promulged by the Operator, that man- " kind are *intereſted in*; which doctrine is in it- " ſelf probable, as being perfectly agreeable to " our natural Notions of things; then, ſuch " *miraculous* Power at leaſt greatly ſtrengthens " or heightens that probability; as it miniſters " juſt ground for preſuming, that the ſpring of " ſuch ſuperior *Power*, is the ſpring of ſuperior " *Knowledge* alſo; when both, to appearance at " leaſt, are kindly held-forth to anſwer the " purpoſes of Benevolence. But, I think, we " are not blindly to follow every thing, that " may be recommended by *miraculous* Power: " on the contrary, I think, it is our *Duty*, be- " cauſe our *Intereſt* is embarked in the caſe, to " try every Spirit, every Doctrine, every Pro- " phet, every Teacher; to prove all things; " and hold faſt that, and that only; which, " upon trial, appears to be worthy the common " Parent of Mankind(*s*)."

I ſhall

(*s*) *Chubb*'s Enquiry concerning Redemption, p. 112. Mr. *Chubb* ſays poſitively, p. 102. " The Miracles " wrought by the Apoſtles, were not connected with any " Doctrine;

I ſhall contradict nothing that is here advanced. It ſeems to be very true, that a *Miracle*; (or

" Doctrine; by this I mean, that they were not particu-
" larly declared to be ſo, by thoſe who wrought them;
" they not having declared what particular doctrines they
" intended to connect thoſe miracles with, or whether
" they intended any ſuch connexion at all." In anſwer to this, pleaſe to conſult *Acts* i. 8. ii. 32, 36. iii. 18. iv. 9, &c.* where you will ſee the miraculous Powers were given, that the Apoſtles might be witneſſes to *Chriſt*, and the miracles are connected with the fundamental Doctrine they preached; that *Jeſus* was the *Chriſt*. And whereas he ſays, p. 103. the Ceremonial and Judicial Law do not appear to have any more connection with, or to be ſupported by, Miracles; than was the diſpenſation of *Mahomet*: and the miracles in the Wilderneſs to be no more than inſtances of God's extraordinary Preſence with the Children of *Iſrael*, till he brought them into the Holy Land; and at moſt, miracles only of kindneſs, or reſentment

* But ye ſhall receive power, after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you; and ye ſhall be witneſs unto me, both in *Jeruſalem*, and in *Judæa*, and in *Samaria*, unto the uttermoſt parts of the Earth, *Acts* i. 8.

Ch. II. 36. Therefore let all the houſe of *Iſrael* know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame *Jeſus* whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and *Chriſt*.

Ch. III. 18. But theſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that *Chriſt* ſhould ſuffer; he hath ſo fulfilled.

Ch. IV. 10. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of *Iſrael*, that by the name of *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead; even by him doth this man ſtand, here before you, whole, &c.

(or what we look-upon to be a *Miracle*, which is the ſame thing to us;) can prove nothing, except *mere Power*; till we know for certain, who is the *Author* of it: ſo that, when it is performed, as to all appearance, by a Man; it only proves him to be aſſiſted by a Being ſuperior to Man. But whether the Being who aſſiſts him be ſent from God or not; can only be proved from the nature of the Revelation he brings, or the greatneſs of the Miracle, or whatever other marks it ſhall pleaſe God to ſet upon the cauſe which he eſpouſes; by which a conſidering perſon will be able to diſtinguiſh it from the

ſentment. In contradiction to this, ſee the account of the Paſſover, where the Miracle and Doctrine are connected, *Ex.* xii. 27. and how God connected the miraculous deliverance from *Egypt*, ch. vi. 1. and how *Moſes* connected the Miracles he had ſeen, with the Doctrines he had heard, iv. 28, 31. And the whole Ceremonial Law was delivered by the miraculous appearance of God (the Viſible *Jehovah*) ch. xix. 20. and his anſwers by a Voice, ver. 19. and the Law given, xx. xxi. by the ſame Perſon; after which he was ſeen by the ſeventy Elders, and his Glory covered the Mount ſix days. See xxiv. 10, &c. What greater connection could there be: or what connection could be wanted; when the Laws were delivered from God himſelf; by the Viſible *Jehovah*, the Angel of his Preſence? But after all this, Mr. *Chubb* concludes, as I have here quoted†.

† See on this ſubject, Bp. *Hoadly*'s Letter to Mr. *Fleetwood*, and Dr. *Sykes*'s Eſſay.

cauſe

cauſe of the Enemy, and be always ſure to act with Safety(*t*).

I muſt own, it does not ſeem to Me at all neceſſary; that God Almighty ſhould preſerve us from miſtakes, with regard to real or pretended Miracles, any more than on other occaſions; without our own Care and Labour: and, if we are impoſed upon, it is all one to us, whether we are deceived by a Man, an Angel, or a Devil. The queſtion with regard to our ſafety in the moral Attributes of God, is not; whether He will ſuffer us to be deceived by one of theſe, *rather* than by another; but whether he will ſuffer us to be deceived *at all*. Wherever he means abſolutely, that a Revelation ſhall be known to come from *him*; he will leave us under no uncertainty about it: but, when he means, that the belief of it ſhall depend upon our honeſt reſearches; he will afford us no *abſolute* demonſtration: and it will become us, in that caſe, to ſearch out the truth by all the powers we are maſters of. And if the Miracle, or what appears to us to be ſuch, be in atteſtation of a Doctrine which we know to be falſe; or contradictory to the Perfections of God, (which the *Deiſts* object to *Chriſtianity*;) or contrary to a prior Revelation of his Will, (which the *Jews* object to *Chriſtianity*;) we ought to conclude, that the *Miracle* was per-

(*t*) See *Hoadly* to *Fleetwood*; Fol. Vol. I. p. 13.

formed

formed by ſome *bad* Being; and we ſhould reject the *Doctrine*, notwithſtanding we might be obliged to allow of the *Miracle*: for it would be a Miracle of a *Lie*, wrought by the power of an evil Spirit to deceive.—And accordingly we find, in fact; that it is abſurd to think of convincing either *Jew* or *Deiſt* of the Divinity of the new Teſtament, by urging the evidence of *Miracles*; till the *Doctrines* eſtabliſhed by them appear to be agreeable to Reaſon. If the *Miracle* be not accompanied by any *Doctrine*; it can be of no ſignification to us, whether it proceeds from a good or a bad Being; our Conduct will not be at all affected by it. But if a *Doctrine* ſhould be confirmed by *Miracle*, which ſhould inform men in an extraordinary manner of the moſt uſeful and important Truths; agreeable to the Attributes of God, and his former Revelations; we ſhould have reaſon to believe, that ſuch a Revelation came from a *good* Being; and that we ought to attend to it moſt ſeriouſly; and eſpecially, if this Revelation was accompanied with the completion of a *Propheſy*, which no Being in the Univerſe, either good or bad, could know; except by Information from the God of the Univerſe. For, whatever uncertainty we may be under with regard to *Miracles* alone, whether they are wrought by a good or a bad Being; this will not be the caſe, with regard

to the *more ſure word of Propheſy*. Here we are certain, that the Revelation muſt come from God; for no Being can with certainty foretell, unleſs he is able to bring about what he foretells; or is inſtructed by Him, who is able to do it: and this can be no other, than the God of the Univerſe(*u*). And accordingly we find; that *Chriſt* himſelf received from Him the Revelation, which he communicated to St. *John* by his Angel(*x*).

Now the *Doctrine* which appears to me to be thus confirmed, and which I have therefore endeavoured to prove and explain and recommend to the ſerious conſideration of my Friends in the foregoing Letters, as worthy of all Acceptation; is briefly as follows.

1. That the Happineſs of Mankind hereafter, will depend upon our *moral* Conduct in this World; or upon our acting according to the beſt of our Underſtanding, as to what is our Duty.

2. That the moſt effectual Motive to the practiſe of Rectitude, is the Belief that we are under the inſpection of an all-perfect moral Governor; who will judge us according to our Works.

(*u*) See *Iſ.* xli. 23. xlii. 9. xliv. 7, 8. xlvi. 9, 10. *Jer.* xiv. 14. xxvii. 9, 10. l. 35, 36.

(*x*) Rev. i. 1.

3. That,

3. That, to prevent the Knowledge of this Truth from being loſt in the World; and a defection to Idolatry or Atheiſm, and an univerſal Depravity of manners, as the conſequence; the ſupreme *Jehovah* did from the beginning ordain, that the *Jehovah Angel*, the ſame great and glorious Being, by whom He created the World, ſhould ſuperintend the moral Conduct of Men; and keep-up, in ſome part of the World, the Hiſtory of God's Providence over it from the beginning; and the Propheſies of what ſhould come to paſs in future times.

4. That, to this purpoſe the *Jehovah Angel* made a Covenant with the *Jewiſh* Nation; which he took under his particular Care, becauſe he knew that *Abraham* would command his Children after him, and they ſhould keep the way of the Lord(*y*); and he ſeparated it from other Nations, that they might not loſe the knowledge of the true God, and fall into Idolatry: and he inſtructed them in the knowledge of God, and his Providence, and his Propheſies, and every thing neceſſary to prove to the reſt of the world his Superintendence over the affairs of men, whenever they ſhould pay a proper Attention to ſuch ſubjects: and prepare them for ſuch future Revelation, as he deſigned to give them in his own Time.

(*y*) *Gen.* xviii. 19.

5. That, to carry-on this deſign, the *Jehovah Angel* ſent his Prophets; to reclaim our Fathers, when they were running into Idolatry: who preached the Truth to them, at the riſk of their Lives; in order to preſerve them in the true Worſhip—as we are told, by way of Parable, in the twelfth chapter of St. *Mark*. "A certain man planted a Vineyard, and ſet a Hedge about it, and digged a place for the Wine-Fat, and built a Tower, and let it out to Huſbandmen, and went into a far Country. And at the ſeaſon he ſent to the Huſbandmen a Servant that he might receive of the Huſbandmen the fruit of the Vineyard; and they caught him, and beat him, and ſent him away empty. And again he ſent unto them an other Servant; and at him they caſt ſtones, and wounded him in the head, and ſent him away ſhamefully handled. And again he ſent an other; and him they killed: and many others; beating ſome, and killing ſome," &c(z).

6. When it was no longer neceſſary that the *Jewiſh* Peculiarity ſhould be kept-up, the ſupreme God ſent into the World a greater Prophet than he had ever ſent before; even that very Perſon, who had ſo long inſtructed the *Jewiſh* Nation by his Prophets: and *He* willingly undertook to deſcend from the Glory he enjoyed in the preſence of God, to teach

(z) *Mar.* xii.

and

and inſtruct a wicked World; and reconcile them to God, by declaring and demonſtrating his love and regard to Them. And the ſame Parable goes-on to tell us the Conſequence of *his* Miſſion. "Having therefore one Son, his well-beloved, he ſent *him* alſo unto them; ſaying, they will reverence my *Son*. But theſe Huſbandmen ſaid among themſelves; This is the Heir, come let us kill him; and the Inheritance ſhall be ours: and they took him, and killed him, and caſt him out of the Vineyard."

7. But though this great Prophet, this Son of God, was ſlain; yet he ſo far ſucceeded in his deſign of reforming Mankind, as to gather together into one Fold or Church many from among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; who received him as their Lord and King, and declared themſelves his Subjects, and ſubmitted to be governed by the Laws of his Kingdom. And the Nation of the *Jews*, by whom he was ſlain, was given-up into the hands of the *Romans*; and their City and Temple deſtroyed. And on being no longer capable of preſerving the Revelations of God, by reaſon of their diſbelief of *Chriſtianity*, the Diſciples of *Chriſt* were commanded to turn and preach to the *Gentiles*; and thoſe who believed ſucceeded into the ſame favour and peculiarity, which had been forfeited by the *Jews*; and have from

from that time to this been entruſted to preſerve the ſacred Hiſtory and Propheſies, which are to *prepare* the World to receive him at his *ſecond* coming, with great Power; as a *Prince*, and *Lord over the whole Earth*.

8. The Superiority of moral Perfection and Obedience to God in the *Jehovah Angel* above all other Beings, did not go unrewarded by the God of the Univerſe. But in reward of his Merits, he received power to raiſe the Dead, to forgive Sin, and to give everlaſting Life to as many as he will, in that Kingdom which the inviſible and ſelf-exiſtent *Jehovah* prepared for him before the World began; and by this means he became a Prince and a Saviour; King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; as will appear to be his proper Title, when he ſhall come at the end of the preſent αἰὼν to reign over all; agreeably to the deſign of God, at the beginning of the World; that we ſhould be ſaved by him, and he ſhould be exalted above all Principalities and Powers. And it was to bring about theſe ends, that the *Chriſtian* ſcheme was originally planned and deſigned by God: viz. to exerciſe and improve his Creatures in *Virtue*; that he might, as a righteous Judge, reward them with *Happineſs*.

There is nothing in this Scheme, contrary to our Reaſon; nor can our Reaſon determine, *from the nature of it*, whether it be true or falſe; though

though it muſt be confeſſed, even by the Unbeliever; that it is impoſſible not to *wiſh* and *hope* that it were true.

What regard then are we to pay to this? Why, we muſt conſider; that here is a Perſon from the other World, who proves his Miſſion by extraordinary Works, beyond the power of Man to perform; propheſied-of many ages before by the profeſſed Servants of God, who are declared to have performed miraculous works themſelves, by the moſt authentic Hiſtory; the *Doctrine* he teaches tends to promote thoſe Virtues, which our own Reaſon and Conſcience approves of, and informs us to be our Duty; and he aſſures us of an eminent *Reward*, far above any thing that this world can boaſt of; and the whole ſcheme that is revealed is great and magnificent; worthy the nature of an immortal Being to purſue, and of the ſupreme God and Governor of the Univerſe to grant; being full of Bounty, Benevolence, and Love. And as we may be well aſſured, that no *bad* Being would ever ſo far counteract its own Nature, as to *perſuade* us to the practiſe of Virtue; much leſs entice us to it, by the hopes of Glory, and Honour, and Immortality; we may ſafely conclude, that the Revelation muſt come from a *good* Being: and from the accompliſhment of Propheſy we muſt conclude, that it comes from the *ſupreme* Being.

Being. So that we are in no danger of being deceived in this caſe to our Hurt; if we do but uſe our own natural Powers, and examine to the bottom of things.

"What though the *Magicians* are ſaid to have done very extraordinary things before *Moſes*; and *Simon Magus* did things, which the people did not diſtinguiſh from true Miracles; and falſe *Chriſts* may do great ſigns and wonders hereafter: yet, as in the two former caſes, the oppoſers of the Truth were brought to own, that *Moſes* and *Philip* both acted by a ſuperior Power; ſo there is no doubt; but in the future ſigns and wonders of falſe *Chriſts*, the ſerious and rational Enquirer will be at no loſs to find on which ſide the cauſe of Truth lies(*a*)."

For we do not believe on *Chriſt*, merely on account of the *Miracles* he wrought; of which there was a long ſeries uncontroul'd, public at different times, of various ſorts, commanding the Winds and Seas, and even Death itſelf; and after all, he received a farther Evidence from God by a Reſurrection from the dead; as he himſelf had foretold: I ſay, we believe in *Chriſt*, not only on account of theſe *Miracles*; but alſo becauſe he fulfilled the *Propheſies* of the ancient Prophets, taught ſo excellent a *Doctrine*, was ſo perfectly good and holy, and had a communication with God; which we are

(*a*) Dr. *Sykes*. *Hoadly*, Fol. Vol. I. p. 10, 12.

aſſured

aſſured of by the accompliſhment of his Propheſies. And therefore even greater Miracles than he performed, if they were poſſible, ought not to draw a rational *Chriſtian* from his Faith; becauſe his Faith does not depend on *Miracles* alone, but on all theſe conſiderations jointly.

We ſee then, on how firm a footing *Chriſtianity* is fixed; and what abundant Evidence God has given us, for what he expects us to believe: and how little Reaſon there is, to fear a rational Enquiry into it; or to uſe the civil Arm in its defenſe: when a free uſe of the Underſtanding, in a fair Examination of all the Arguments for or againſt it, will do ſo much more honour to the Cauſe; and be ſo much more agreeable to the Example of its Founder.

POSTSCRIPT

TO

THE SEVENTH LETTER.

On MIRACLES.

AS a late Writer upon *Miracles* hath attempted to overthrow their Credibility; and conſequently the Belief of all Revelation, as far as it is founded on them, by arguing *a priori* from their *Nature*; it will be neceſſary for *Me* to conſider *his* Arguments.

He tells us; that a *Miracle* may accurately be defined, "a Tranſgreſſion of the Laws of Nature, by a particular Volition of the Deity; or, by the Interpoſal of ſome inviſible Agent." Upon which I would obſerve; that there is not one *Miracle* mentioned in the whole Scripture, that can be proved to agree with this Definition. The Laws of *Nature*, or, in other Words, the Laws

Laws of *God*, are never ſaid to be tranſgreſſed by a *Miracle*, in any one of the ſacred Writers; nor any thing like it once intimated: but the direct contrary appears, in the account of every Miracle, which is particularly deſcribed; the Cauſe being adequate to the Effect, according to the Laws of Nature, in all of them; wherever either any material Inſtruments are uſed, or the natural immaterial powers of ſpiritual Beings are exerted. Whereas, if the Effects were brought about contrary to the Laws of Nature, this would not be the caſe; but the Cauſe would at leaſt be inadequate to the Effect, if not contrary to it. And therefore, "though conſtant Experience ſhould aſſure us, (as Mr. *Hume* expreſſes it) that the Laws of Nature are firm and unalterable;" [as they certainly are:] yet there would ariſe from thence no proof againſt Miracles; becauſe a Miracle is no Violation of them.

If a blind man was made to ſee, without any alteration in the organs of Sight; or a lame man was made to walk, while the Limb continued broken and unaltered; he would have, and not have, the uſe of the ſame Organs at the ſame Time; which is impoſſible: and to ſuppoſe Omnipotence itſelf can make theſe Organs perform their offices, (when by any accident they are made incapable of it,) without ſome alteration in them to ſupply their de-

fects; is as abſurd, as to ſuppoſe it done without any Power at all. For, what is Omnipotence; without an actual Exertion of Power? and where is the Exertion of Power; if every thing continues as it did before? Theſe things therefore would be *contrary* to the Laws of Nature; becauſe the Effect would be produced, without an adequate Cauſe; i. e. by a Cauſe incapable of producing it: and this would be the caſe univerſally of all Miracles ſuppoſed to be performed contrary to the Laws of Nature; they muſt be *Impoſſibilities*. But that the Eye ſhould ſee, and the Limb perform its operations, after being cured of their defects; is no more *contrary* to the Laws of Nature, than the performance of their natural functions, before they were out of order. And if ſuperior Beings are able by their natural Powers to perform ſuch Cures as theſe, which it is impoſſible to diſprove; they act as agreeably to the Laws of Nature, as we do in our common actions(*a*). It is impoſſible to prove; that God will not permit Beings ſuperior to Man; on ſome occaſions to exert their natural Powers in this World, in actions which are above the Power of man to perform: and, in ſuch caſes, the action will not only be poſſible, but agreeable to the Laws of Nature; and will direct us to refer the action to ſome Being ſuperior to Man.

(*a*) Dr. *Sam. Clarke*'s Evidences, p. 375.

And,

And, as this is the whole that a *Chriſtian* needs contend for, upon the ſubject of *Miracles*; all diſpute, whether a Miracle be poſſible or not; and whether it be contrary or agreeable to the Laws of Nature, will be nothing more than a diſpute about the definition of a Word: for revealed Religion ſtands in need of no other kind of Signs, or Wonders, or Miracles, to ſupport it; than merely the Interpoſition of ſome Being ſuperior to Man, manifeſted by the performance of ſome action agreeable to the natural Powers of that Being, and ſuperior to the Power of Man; and it is of no ſignification to the cauſe of Revelation, whether ſuch an action be called a *Miracle*; or not. It is certain; that all the Miracles we meet with in the Scripture, which are diſtinctly explained to us in their circumſtances, are of this nature; and were performed by Cauſes adequate to their Effects. When God created this World by his Command, it was performed by the *Logos* or *Word* of God: when *Noah* was to be preſerved in the Flood, he was ordered to build an Ark to ſave him: when a withered Hand was to receive motion from the Will of Man, it was made whole like the other: when a Blind man was made to ſee, the Scales which obſtructed his ſight were removed: in all theſe caſes, the Cauſe was adequate to the Effect; and, when we know not the method, by which any extra-

ordinary

ordinary Effect mentioned in the Scripture was brought about; we have no more reaſon to ſuppoſe it to be *contrary* to the Laws of Nature, than thoſe already mentioned.

St. *Peter* declares; that the healing of the lame man, at the beautiful gate of the Temple, was not performed by *Him*; but by the Power of *God:* the People wondered at the Cure, ſuppoſing it to be done by his own Power; but He diſclaimed it. This was alſo the caſe, when *Annanias* and *Sapphira* were ſlain; (*Acts* v.) and the Magicians who oppoſed *Moſes*, when they ſaw what *he* had done was *above* the Power of *Man*, concluded very juſtly; that it was done by the finger of *God*. They did not, and indeed could not argue, as the *Deiſts* do; that it was above the power of Man to perform, and therefore was not performed: but that it was above the power of Man, and therefore was done by a power *ſuperior* to that of Man. To ſuppoſe an action *done* by the power of Man, which is *above* the power of Man; is to ſuppoſe the Cauſe inadequate to the Effect: and, conſequently, a contradiction to the laws of Nature: but, when ſuch an action is performed by the finger of *God*, the Cauſe is equal to the Effect; and the Laws of Nature are preſerved.

Even when *Chriſt* himſelf performed his Miracles in the fleſh, it does not appear, that he did *by his own hands* put in order the eyes of the blind;

blind; or perform any ſuch action as poſſibly might be inconſiſtent, according to the Laws of Nature, with the incumbrance of the human Body: but the Power, which immediately acted was the *Holy Ghoſt*; and if the Holy Ghoſt did perform the Miracles by his *own natural* Power, there was nothing in them contrary to the laws of Nature. And we are aſſured; that it was the *Spirit* of *God*, which enabled *Chriſt*, while on Earth, to heal Diſeaſes, caſt-out Devils, raiſe the Dead, and work all ſorts of Miracles, for confirmation of his divine Miſſion(*b*). He was anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Power (*c*); and was full of the Holy Ghoſt (*d*); and God gave not the Spirit by meaſure unto him (*e*); and he himſelf declares, that he caſt out Devils by the Spirit of God(*f*); and ſays expreſsly, the Father which is in me, *He* doth the Works (*g*): ſo that, when he ſpat upon the ground, and made clay, and anointed the eyes of the blind; the miraculous Cure was immediately and perſonally performed by the ſame Perſon, who raiſed him from the dead; who is called the *great Power of God*; by whom the Apoſtles alſo performed *their* Miracles.

And here it may be proper to make this *general* obſervation; that, wherever it is imagined,

(*b*) *Whitby* on I *John* v. 6. *Mat.* xii. 28. *Luke* iv. 18. 20. (*c*) *Acts* x. 38. (*d*) *Luke* iv. 1. (*e*) *John* iii. 34. (*f*) *Mat.* xii. 28. (*g*) *John* xiv. 10.

that

that the laws of Nature are contradicted; the true ſtate of the caſe is entirely miſtaken: for the laws of Nature continue always the ſame; and, where there is any change in the effect which we obſerve, the change is made in the things themſelves; that is, in the Eſſences or in the Properties. This is the caſe of Water, hardened into Ice; Wax, melted by Heat; or Gunpowder, when it is moiſtened: upon which alteration of their Properties, their Effects, though totally different from what they were before, will be as agreeable to the laws of Nature; as their contrary Effects were, before the change. As to the inſtance, mentioned by a late Writer, of Fire, which, without loſing its Properties, does not burn Combuſtibles; I muſt beg leave to deny the Fact: for to ſuppoſe an adequate Cauſe not to produce its natural Effect, is equally abſurd, as to imagine an Effect to be produced without an adequate Cauſe: which would not be a *Miracle*, but an *Impoſſibility*. God may deprive Fire of its burning quality; but then it will ceaſe to be Fire: or he may deprive the Materials of their combuſtible Nature; but then they will ceaſe to be Combuſtibles: or he may prevent their meeting together—but, if they continue to have the ſame Properties and are brought into contact; they muſt and will produce their natural Effects: or, in other words, they muſt and will obſerve

the

the Law of their Natures, which God has appointed to them. And this they will do conſtantly and regularly, till he ſhall add or ſubſtract or change ſome Circumſtance or ſome Property in them; and then they will go on according to the Properties that ſtill remain unchanged; and the new ones that have been ſuperinduced: and all this will be as agreeable to the laws of Nature, as it is for a Bowl running-on in a ſtrait line, and being ſtruck by a viſible or inviſible Being, (it is all the ſame, either way) to change its direction; and continue its motion at an angle with the line it was firſt moving in: and to ſuppoſe the contrary to this, is to ſuppoſe they *loſe* their Properties, whilſt they *retain* them; and are changed, without any Alteration.

If it be argued, in oppoſition to this; that God can produce what Effect he pleaſes, by his own immediate Power: I anſwer, it is true; but then the laws of Nature are entirely out of the Queſtion: and, the nature of created Beings not being at all concerned in the Effect, the whole muſt be reſolved into the *divine* Power, as the adequate Cauſe; and then every thing poſſible will be accounted-for, from the nature of Omnipotence. But the Queſtion we are conſidering does not relate to the *immediate* Power of God; but to his making uſe of *Inſtruments*; and producing ſuch Effects by *them*, or by *their* means,

as are contrary to the Natures with which he has endowed them

Now we know the difference of one thing from another, only by the difference of their *Properties*; (for we know the *Eſſence* of nothing) and we know the difference of their *Properties*, only by their Accidents and Effects; and, conſequently, wherever we find a difference in theſe, we have reaſon to believe; there is an alteration in the things themſelves: and it is very conſiſtent in the Author of Nature, to make what change he pleaſes in the things themſelves; but not to produce Effects by inadequate Cauſes. For, ſo far as the Cauſes are inadequate to the Effects, the Effects are produced by no Cauſe at all; which, if allowed to be *poſſible* in any one inſtance, may be *true* with regard to the production of the Univerſe; and will lead directly to Atheiſm. I ſhall give an inſtance, to explain what I mean: If a Perſon ſhould walk upon the Water, as he does upon the ſolid Ground; either there muſt be an alteration made, in the properties of the Water; that is, it muſt be changed from what it was before; (though it may continue to be called by the ſame name) or there muſt be ſome alteration in the properties of the human Body; or the Body muſt be ſupported: it cannot poſſibly be done otherwiſe; any more *by* a Miracle, than *without* one: for a Miracle muſt be cauſed by ſomething ade-

quate to the Effect wrought, and able to produce it; as much as if it were no Miracle. To deny this, is to make no difference between a *Miracle* and an *Impoſſibility*; which is all the *Deiſt* deſires to be granted, in order to attack Revelation. In ſhort, to imagine that Water, which at this moment is *not able* to ſupport a Man, ſhall the next moment be *able* to ſupport him; without any alteration or change, either in the Water or the Man; implies the ſame contradiction, as to ſuppoſe a thing to have the property of hardneſs, while it continues ſoft; of length, while it continues ſhort; of bluntneſs, while it continues pointed: and to argue from the nature of Omnipotence, is nothing to the purpoſe. For, if there is no change made in the things themſelves, but they continue juſt the ſame as they were before; there is no act of Omnipotence exerted: and they will continue to obſerve the Laws, which God gave them at their Creation.

It is no leſs abſurd to ſuppoſe, that God ever makes uſe of *improper* Inſtruments to perform his Will. A God of infinite Power can have no Occaſion to do it; for he can *give* to every Thing what properties he pleaſes; he can *change* and alter them, as he pleaſes; till they become *proper* Inſtruments to bring about his deſigns: or he can accompliſh his Will, by his own *immediate* power; without the uſe of any Inſtru-

ments at all. And is it poſſible to conceive; that ſuch a Being ſhould make uſe of any thing, contrary to the Nature he gave it; and not rather adapt it to the end, for which he deſigned it to ſerve; or elſe perform his deſigns without it—that, in order to produce a Famine, he ſhould ſend Plenty; and, to burn-up a Country, he ſhould ſend Rain? or that, becauſe he is Allpowerful, he ſhould make uſe of an Eaſt, rather than a Weſt wind, to carry the locuſts out of *Egypt* into the *Red Sea*; [*Ex.* x. 19.] and drive them one way, by forcing them to move the contrary? And, when God has formed the human Body with all the marks of Wiſdom we can conceive, by adapting every part to its particular uſe; is there any Senſe in aſſerting, that, becauſe he is Allmighty, he could have made the ſeveral parts to ſerve the ſame purpoſes as well as they do, if they had been formed in any other manner; if the Bones were as ſoft as the Fleſh, if the Muſcles were as hard and ſolid as the Bones now are, if there were no Joints, nor Veins, nor Arteries, nor Nerves? Does not ſuch a way of talking deſtroy the very Idea of his Wiſdom, in having formed things as they are; and betray our own Ignorance and Folly? It is Nonſenſe, at the beſt; if not Impiety.

But farther; Mr. *Hume* ſeems to look upon every thing to be contrary to the Laws of Nature, which is contrary to *our* Experience. For he

he ſays; "Firm and unalterable Experience hath eſtabliſhed the Laws of Nature." I ſuppoſe, he means; that firm and unalterable Experience certifies to us, and aſſures us, that there are certain Laws of Nature. And I allow, that we have reaſon to conclude from Experience; that there are certain Laws of Nature. But yet firm and unalterable Experience will never aſſure us of any future Event, even in our experimental Philoſophy; unleſs we are perfectly certain, that the Circumſtances were the ſame *before*, as they are *now*; in every particular—For a very little Accident, quite unobſerved, may produce an Effect contrary to what we have ever before experienced; as may be inſtanced in the accidental moiſture of the Sand, in caſting Lead; and many other caſes. And, when ſuch Accidents happen in Experiments where they are unexpected, and ſometimes perhaps are not to be accounted-for; a true Philoſopher does not immediately cry out, this is contrary to the Laws of Nature; only becauſe it is contrary to his Experience. If this were the caſe, he muſt look upon every thing that appears extraordinary; and indeed, every effect he had never before experienced; to be contrary to the Laws of Nature. Thus, when the King of *Siam* diſbelieved the *Dutch* Ambaſſador's account; that in *Holland* the Water was ſo hard in cold weather, as to be walked upon; he argued, like Mr. *Hume*, from his

his Experience of the Laws of Nature; *eſtabliſhed on firm and unalterable Principles:* he conſidered the Laws of his own *Climate*, as the Laws of *Nature*; and thought, there were no Laws of Nature, but what he had experienced at *Siam:* and, if we were to put the Word *Ice*, inſtead of the Word *Miracle*, into the Argument; his Majeſty's Experience will prove againſt the exiſtence of *Ice*, as compleatly as Mr. *Hume*'s does againſt a Miracle. *e. g.*

"As firm and unalterable Experience has eſtabliſhed the Laws [of Nature;] the proof againſt the exiſtence of *Ice*, from the very Nature of the Fact, is as intire; as any Argument from Experience can poſſibly be imagined (*h*): and, as an uniform Experience amounts to a Proof, there is a direct and full Proof from the Nature of the Fact againſt the exiſtence of *Ice*(*i*)."

But we can hardly imagine Mr. *Hume* meaned to build his Argument (from firm and unalterable Experience) merely upon *his* never having experienced a Miracle; but perhaps upon the nonexperience of all ages in this reſpect, from the beginning of the World. But there is no ſuch *Poſtulatum* to be granted. No ſuch nonexperience in Fact: we have many accounts of Miracles, in our moſt ancient and beſt authenticated Hiſtories: and, though the *Deiſt* does

(*h*) Hume's Eſſays, 180. (*i*) Ibid. 181.

not

not *believe* theſe accounts; he has no right to aſſume it, without Proof, that they are all *falſe*. Eſpecially, as he knows it to be a queſtion, among learned men of the beſt underſtanding; whether *ſpiritual* Beings do not ſometimes interfere in *human* affairs, and cauſe *Appearances* very contrary to common *Experience*.

In ſhort; the Argument againſt Miracles, which is drawn from Experience in natural Philoſophy, or from the common Courſe of inanimate Nature; where we take it for granted, that all the circumſtances relating to the event, are entirely the ſame; is altogether frivolous, when applied to *Miracles:* and muſt be ſo, in every other inſtance, where a *moral* Agent is ſuppoſed to interfere. A Ball may fall to the ground 1000, or 10000 times; but, if any one ſhould chooſe to ſtop it in its fall, the Argument from Experience would be of no kind of ſervice to prove that it would fall to the ground the next time it was thrown up. And the ſame is the caſe, in every miraculous Interpoſition. The probability of it does not at all depend upon the general Courſe of inanimate Nature; but upon the Will of the Agent who is ſuppoſed to interfere. The ſpecific Gravity of the human Body will make no argument againſt a Perſon's walking upon the Water; if he be ſupported by an adequate Power: But more of this by and by.

I ſhall

I ſhall go-on with Mr. *Hume*'s Objection. If, by conſtant uniform Experience, he does not mean the conſtant uniform Experience of all Ages from the beginning of the World; but only the conſtant uniform Experience of men, for the laſt ſixteen or ſeventeen hundred years; his aſſertion is very innocent, and what no conſiſtent Proteſtant needs to contradict. For he does not ſurely expect his Reader to conclude; that, becauſe no Miracles have happened, *ſince* that time; therefore no Miracles happened, either *at* that time; or *before* it. Miracles, ſays the *Chriſtian*, are neceſſary to eſtabliſh a Revelation; and no new Revelation has been, or can be, eſtabliſhed without them; for Reaſons already mentioned. About 1700 years ago, God gave a Revelation to mankind, which He eſtabliſhed by Miracles; and Miracles have never ſince that time been experienced, becauſe no new Revelation has been given.—Will the *Deiſt* conclude from hence, that they did not happen at the time ſpecified; becauſe they have never happened ſince? or, becauſe God does not *often* interfere viſibly in the affairs of Men, therefore he *never* does? or, becauſe he does not interfere upon *trifling* occaſions, therefore he does not interfere in affairs of the *greateſt importance*; to convince men of his Being, of his Providence over the World as a moral Governor, of a Reſurrection

ſurrection from the dead, and a future Judgement; and to put an end to Idolatry and human Sacrifices, and all the abominable Rites and Cerimonies of the Heathen Worſhip?

Here the *Deiſt* is conſcious of his Weakneſs; and does not dare to enter into the queſtion, as relative to the important *End* which Miracles are deſigned to ſerve: becauſe it ſeems ſo extremely probable, that God might reveal his Will to Man, upon ſuch important Occaſions; and Miracles would be neceſſary to give credit to a Revelation as coming from him. But he artfully avoids conſidering the ſubject in this Light; ſtrips the queſtion of all circumſtance, relation, conſequence, and connection with the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of *God*, and the Benefit of *Man*; and then aſks gravely, whether Miracles be *probable*, or not, in their own Nature: As if every act of an intelligent Being (and ſuch are all Miracles) did not depend on Circumſtances. But, to anſwer Mr. *Hume* in his own way—If Miracles are, *in their own nature*, proper *Atteſtations* to the Interpoſition of ſome Being ſuperior to Man; then there is ſomething in their Nature, which makes it probable they will be performed; whenever it ſhall pleaſe God to reveal his Will to Man. Miracles therefore are *in their own Nature* as *probable*,

as it is that God will reveal his Will to Man; which was never looked-upon as *improbable*, even by the heathen Philoſophers.

That ſome Being of ſuperior Power to Man, is *able* to ſupport a man upon the water, or cure a broken limb, or a defect of the ſight immediately, is as unqueſtionable; as it is, that a Man has the power to ſtop a Ball which is thrown into the Air, from falling to the Ground by its natural Gravitation: But, whether he *will* actually do it or not, depends entirely (as I have obſerved) upon the Will of the Agent; and not in the leaſt upon the nature of the Action, but upon the motives and circumſtances, by which the Agent is influenced. The nature of the Action is no farther concerned, than only whether it be in the Power of the Agent to perform it. So that, if we do not conſider the Will and Deſign of God; and Miracles, as ſerving to promote that Will and Deſign; the queſtion, whether Miracles are in their own Nature probable or improbable, is too naked to be anſwered: and we may as well inquire, whether it is probable or improbable, that the *Iroquois* will ſend Embaſſadors next month to the *Cherokees*. For, as the Actions of all moral Agents depend upon Circumſtances; if you take away the Circumſtances, there is no motive left for Choice: and, if you take away our Knowledge of the circum-

circumſtances; and, conſequently, our knowledge of the motives; we have no *data* left to judge by, whether they will act one way or the other. And this is the ſtate of the queſtion, as it is here propoſed by Mr. *Hume* to be examined.—So that, though he had ſucceeded ever ſo well, in proving that Miracles are improbable; conſidered in themſelves, "as Tranſgreſſions of the Law of Nature, by a particular Volition of the Deity;" (according to *his* Definition of a Miracle;) yet his Argument would not at all affect the Miracles of the old and new Teſtament; which are all of them Interpoſitions of Providence, *agreeable* to the Laws of Nature; and Atteſtations to a divine Revelation, calculated for the good of Mankind, in affairs of the greateſt Importance. This it is, that makes the difference between the Scripture Miracles and all others; and renders *theſe* worthy of the greateſt Regard; whilſt all *others*, how well ſo ever atteſted, may be ſafely neglected: becauſe it is not only highly *improbable*, but abſolutely *incredible*; that the ſupreme God and Father of the Univerſe ſhould interfere in the affairs of this World, either perſonally or by command, in a miraculous manner, for no reaſon at all; (which muſt be the caſe of Miracles, conſidered in themſelves, and as ſtripped of all circumſtance and connection;) or for a *trifling* one.

End of the SEVENTH LETTER.

Page 901, Note. See this argument of Mr. *Hume*'s fully anſwered, in a Pamphlet intitled, Thoughts on the Nature of the Grand Apoſtaſy, p. 222.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE Opinions of the Learned Chriſtians, BOTH ANCIENT and MODERN, CONCERNING THE GENERATION OF JESUS CHRIST;

IN ORDER TO PROVE,

That it was the ſame Word of God, who was in the Beginning with God before the Creation of the World, that ſuffered for Mankind; and not any other Soul or Spirit that was afterwards created.

AN INQUIRY

PREFACE.

PREFACE.

"I do not think; ſays the learned Dr. *Whit-*
"*by*, that I can do any thing more ac-
"ceptable to God the Father, or to our
"Saviour, or to the Chriſtian Doctrine, or the
"Chriſtian Church, and that moſt celebrated
"Part of it, the Church of *England*; than by
"aſſerting to our heavenly Father, (to whom
"alone belongs the Right of fixing the Laws
"of Conſcience;) and to Chriſt (who is the
"only Leader and Maſter of the Church;) that
"entire Authority of framing Articles of Faith;
"which, with the greateſt detriment to the
"Church and Faith, not the Romiſh Church
"only, but thoſe alſo, who boaſt themſelves to
"be, above others, the genuine Sons of the
"Church of England; yea, even her Prieſts,
"have

"have aſcribed to the Fathers, Councils," &c(*a*).

What the learned Doctor has here advanced is ſo certain, that we can no otherwiſe be aſſured whether any one Article of our Faith be divine, or human; founded on the Word of God, or merely on the Authority of Man. And what this very reſpectable writer has here ſaid in general, I ſhall, in the following pages, apply to the particular Doctrine of the Generation of *Jeſus Chriſt*, in order to recover to the Philoſophical Chriſtians a fundamental Article of Faith; which, though univerſally believed by the Common People, hath been explained away, ever ſince the Council of *Nice*, in the Theories of almoſt all the different ſects of learned Men, who have undertaken to lay Chriſtianity before the World as a Syſtem.

The Article I mean is This; that it was the *Lord* of Glory, (I *Cor.* ii. 8.) or the Lord who bought us; or, in other words, that it was the *ſame divine Perſon*, *Nature*, and *Subſtance*, which was in the beginning with God; that *felt* the pains of the Croſs, and *ſuffered* for mankind.

This is the Doctrine; which, in St. *Paul*'s days, was to the *Jews*, a *Stumbling-block*; and to the *Greeks*, *Fooliſhneſs*; I *Cor.* i. 23. and ſeems to have been looked-upon in the ſame light, for theſe 1400 years, by the Councils; and by

(*a*) *Whitby*'s Diſſert. de Script. Interp. Præf. Sect. I.

almoſt

almoſt all the different Sects of Chriſtians(*a*).—The *Cerinthians* denied it; out of a pretence, that the divine Nature or Subſtance, which they called *Chriſt*, left the man *Jeſus* at his Death—The *Sabellians* denied it; by maintaining, that the *Logos* was *God*; and that *Chriſt* had no exiſtence, before his Birth of the Virgin *Mary: (alium eſſe Dei verbum, alium* Chriſtum(*b*);) and that it was *this Chriſt* who ſuffered.—The *Socinians* denied it; by maintaining, that *Chriſt* was a mere Man; ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος· actuated indeed by the Spirit of God dwelling in him; but his Sufferings were only thoſe of a mere Man—And the *Athanaſians* deny it; by aſſerting, that the Eſſence of the *Son of God* is impaſſible.

And this is the doctrine of all the *European* Churches, whether Proteſtant or Papiſt; who receive the four firſt general Councils, as the Teſts of Hereſy.

All theſe Sects, though differing from one another in ſome particulars, yet agree to maintain the ſame Concluſion; viz. that the pains of the Croſs were not ſuffered or felt by that *Being*, *Subſtance*, *Eſſence*, or *Perſon*, who was *in the beginning with God*; but by ſome other who had no exiſtence till above 4000 years after the Creation of the World; and then was joined to him in the Body, which was born of the

(*a*) Let. I. p, 19. (*b*) Let. I. p. 29.

Virgin *Mary*. And the reaſon, upon which the *Athanaſians* build their opinion, is this; that the Son of God was *generated from the Subſtance of the Father*; and was therefore *impaſſible*.

Thus one of the moſt important Articles of Chriſtianity; I may venture to ſay, the moſt important of them all; has been long given-up and loſt, among the philoſophical Chriſtians, upon the Authority of a *metaphyſical* Argument; againſt the plain Hiſtory of the New Teſtament. And from hence ariſes the neceſſity, (if we would maitain, that it was the *Lord of Glory* that bought us, by his *own* ſufferings, and *humiliation*; and not a mere *Spirit*, which was *joined* to him;) that we examine this metaphyſical Argument to the bottom: *viz.* whether the *Son of God* is indeed *generated* from the Father's *Subſtance*, and therefore *impaſſible*; or whether this notion is founded upon a falſe Philoſophy.

The diſcuſſing of this queſtion will help to clear the Chriſtian Religion from many difficulties, unknown to the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians; in which the preſent Syſtem of Orthodoxy is involved: and I ſhall venture to add, that thoſe Divines have much to anſwer for; who have introduced theſe difficulties in the way to truth, which for many ages have prevented, in a great meaſure, the propagation

of

of Chriſtianity among the *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Deiſts*. And it is in vain for the Chriſtian Divines to complain, as they do, of the increaſe of Deiſm; whilſt they themſelves are determin'd to defend theſe Errors, at all Events; merely becauſe they find them already introduced.

I have not the leaſt doubt; that it was ſuch ſtumbling blocks, as we ſhall meet with in the following pages; which have been looked-upon as orthodox, and inculcated as eſſential doctrines of Chriſtianity, without any authority from Scripture; and not any thing that can be found in the New Teſtament; which prevailed with *Bati*, the Prince of the *Tartars*, to prefer *Mahometiſm* to Chriſtianity(*c*). He could never have done this; if Chriſtianity had been repreſented to him in its native ſimplicity. And let but this fundamental Article of Chriſtianity be reſtored; that God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only Son (and not the *Perſon* of his only Son, abſtracted from his *Eſſence*; nor *another* Spirit, that was *joined* to him;) to ſuffer for Mankind: and by that amazing inſtance of his Love, reconciled the World to Himſelf; and gained over ſuch prodigious numbers to Chriſtianity, in oppoſition to all the powers of the Earth: and we ſhould ſoon find, it would now have the ſame effect upon both the Reaſon and the Paſſions of man-

(*c*) See page 873.

kind; as formerly. But, while we continue to be aſhamed of this doctrine; and argue, that *we muſt not think ſo meanly of the Son of God; as to imagine his Eſſence to be ſubject to the ſufferings of the fleſh* (*d*): we loſe the whole Spirit of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, and confound ourſelves with metaphyſical ſubtilties; and are not able to explain the Chriſtian Syſtem, or even what is called the Apoſtles Creed, without loading it with a thouſand inconſiſtences and contradictions; which it is impoſſible for any man of Senſe to believe.

Epiphanius, who has written ſo largely and ſo learnedly againſt the Heretics; gives us the orthodox doctrine of the ſufferings of Chriſt, as it was underſtood in his time, and has been underſtood ever ſince; in the following words—

"But, if the impaſſible Word of God ſuf-
"fered theſe things; [the indignities before
"mentioned] the ſuffering was not corporeal,
"*diſtinct* from his impaſſibility; and yet *not*
"*diſtinct*, becauſe it was well-pleaſing to him,
"that though he did not ſuffer, μὴ πάσχοντος αὐτοῦ,
"yet the ſufferings ſhould be reckoned to him;
"and as a ſpot in a garment does not reach the
"body of him who wears it, and yet is REC-
"KONED to him; ſo God ſuffered in the Fleſh,
"his Divinity ſuffering nothing. But the ſuf-
"fering of the Fleſh, which fleſh was borne by

(*d*) Bp. *Pearſon.*

"the

" the Divinity, was reckoned to the Divinity; " that our Salvation might be by him." *Ancor.* ch. 36.

Εἰ δὲ ταῦτα πέπονθεν ὁ ἀπαθὴς τῷ Θεῷ Λόγος, ἄρα τὸ πάθος σωματικόν ἐστιν ἑκὸς τῆς αὐτῷ ἀπαθείας· καὶ ὐκ ἑκὸς πάλιν, διὰ τὸ εὐδοκῆσαι, καὶ τοίγε μὴ πάσχοντος αὐτῷ, εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὸ πάθος λελόγισθαι. Καὶ καθάπερ ἐν ἱματίῳ σπῖλος τὸ σῶματι φορεῖντος ὰ φθάνει, ὁ δὲ σπῖλος τῷ ἱματίῳ εἰς τὸν φορεῖντα λογίζεται· ὥτως ὁ Θεὸς πέπονθεν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ, τῆς θεότητος αὐτῷ μηδὲν παθούσης· εἰς δὲ τὴν θεότητα τὸ πάθος τῆς σαρκὸς ὑπὸ τῆς θεότητος φορυμένης ἐλογίσθη· ἵνα ἐν τῇ θεότητι ἡμῖν ἡ σωτηρία γένηται.

Here we ſee, in the firſt place; that, if the Chriſt, whom St. *Paul* declares to be paſſible; (παθητὸς ὁ Χριστὸς, Acts xxvi. 23.) be the ſame Being, whom *Epiphanius* means by the Word of God, and declares to be impaſſible; the two doctrines are contradictory to one another. And 2dly. that if there was no other ſuffering, but that of the fleſh, which was borne by the Divinity; the ſuffering of the *Logos* was only nominal. The Mahometans have improved upon this notion: and declare, that we muſt not think ſo meanly of the Son of God; as to imagine that he ſuffered at all.

AN

INQUIRY, &c.

LETTER THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

How the Diſputes, concerning the antemundane Generation of Jeſus Chriſt, *firſt began in the Chriſtian Church; and the* Homoöuſian *Doctrine was eſtabliſhed, as an Article of Faith.*

THERE never was any thing of ſo much detriment to the progreſs of Chriſtianity, as the diſputes which have ariſen among Chriſtians upon *metaphyſical* queſtions; and the carrying them on to ſuch a degree of heat and rage, as to anathematiſe, excommunicate, and murther one another; upon account of

of their differences about ſuch ſubjects. The ill conſequences of theſe diſſentions were not put an end to, as might have been hoped and expected, by the deciſions of the Councils; but thoſe very deciſions, being founded upon a falſe Philoſophy; and huddled-up (*a*) into a Creed, without due conſideration; have been teeming ever ſince with new and unforeſeen monſters; and have overwhelmed the whole Chriſtian Syſtem with confuſion.

In the following pages, it is propoſed to inquire into the opinions of the learned Chriſtians, both ancient and modern, concerning the *antemundane* Generation of *Jeſus Chriſt* from the Subſtance of the Father; as it was underſtood and eſtabliſhed at the *Nicene* Council: the Reaſons, by which that opinion has been ſupported; and the Authority, upon which the belief of it hath been bound upon all ſucceeding Ages.

In the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, the Chriſtians believed in God the Father Almighty; and in *Jeſus Chriſt*, his only Son, our Lord; and, till they undertook to explain the manner, in which the Son of God was ſuppoſed to be generated from the Father's Subſtance; they found no difficulty in believing, that he was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, born of the Virgin *Mary*, ſuffered under *Pontius Pilate*, &c. and, during

(*a*) See *Ben Mordecai*'s firſt letter to *Eliſha Levi*, p. 52, and 188.

this

this ſimple Faith, there was no mention made of two Gods (*b*); but all acknowledged the Father to be the *only* true God, till the time of *Noetus* and *Sabellius*; whoſe Hereſy, if we believe *Baſil* and *Epiphanius*, conſiſted in the belief of one ſingular Subſtance in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt (*c*); and theſe accuſed the orthodox Chriſtians, that they believed in two Gods; the Father and the Son.—To this accuſation, the *Antenicenes* anſwered; that, although they allowed, the Son of God was called by the name of God; and the Father and Son were two diſtinct and different Beings; the Son being ἕτερος τῷ παλῃός ἀριθμῷ· diſtinct from the Father, *in Number* (*d*); yet there could be but One *God*, becauſe there was but one *Supreme* and *Unoriginate*: and it was upon this principle, that the Church condemned *Sabellius*, as an Atheiſt and Blaſphemer; becauſe he maintained, the Son of God was God over all; ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός (*e*).—This is what *Euſebius* declares to be in his time the doctrine of the Church: "If they fear," ſays he, "leaſt we profeſs *Two* "Gods; let them know, that, although we "profeſs the Son to be God, yet there is only "ONE God:" namely, He, who alone is

(*b*) *Whitby* Diſq. mod. p. 178. (*c*) Letter I. p. 27. (*d*) *Juſt. Mart.* Dial. cum *Tryph.* p. 358.—Let. I. p. 167. —*Whitby* Diſq. mod. p. 85. (*e*) *Euſeb.* Eccleſ. Theol. l. II. c. 4.

without beginning, who is *unbegotten*, who poſſeſſeth divinity *of Himſelf*, who is the *cauſe* of the Son's exiſtence, by whom even the Son confeſſeth that he hath life; *Jo.* vi. 57. and who gave to the Son to have life in Himſelf; *Jo.* v. 26. from whence the Son teacheth, that the Father is *our* God, and *his* God; *Jo.* xx. 7. and whom the Apoſtle teacheth to be the *Head* of the Son; *Eph.* i. 22. Now if there is but *One Principle* and *Head*; how can there be *Two Gods* (*g*)? Is not *He* the only One God, who hath no Superior? to whom no other was the *cauſe* of his exiſtence? who, as his own peculiarity and right, poſſeſſing divinity, unbegotten, and without beginning, made the Son Partaker of his Life and Divinity; put all things in ſubjection under Him, commanded Him, taught Him, gave Him all things, glorified Him, exalted Him above all, declared Him king of all, delivered up to Him all judgment; to whom the Son offers up his Prayers, whom he obeys, to whom he gives thanks, and whom he teacheth us to believe, that He is the *only* true God; whom he profeſſeth to be greater than himſelf; and would have us all know, that He, who exiſts above all, is even His God (*b*)?

(*g*) *Athanaſius* ſpeaks in the ſame manner; ὥσπερ δὲ μία ἀρχὴ, καὶ καλὰ τῶν ὅλων ὁ Θεός. Orat. 5. (*b*) *Whitby* Diſq. mod. p. 175.—*Euſeb.* l. I. c. 11.—Reply to *Waterland's* Def. 15.

Here

Here we ſee the pure and primitive Faith, as it is in the Scripture; before it was adulterated by intermixing a falſe Philoſophy with the doctrines of the New Teſtament.—But the Council of *Nice* was not contented with ſuch proofs of the Unity; as were found in the Word of God, and had been maintained in the Church till that time; but choſe to anſwer the *Sabellians*, upon the principles of the then-reigning Philoſophy: and accordingly they decreed, that the Son of God was *of*, or *out of*, *the Subſtance* of God; and that the Father and Son were *one God*, becauſe they were both of the *ſame indiviſible Subſtance:* and, in their diſputes with the *Euſebians*, inſtead of keeping to the words of Scripture, that Chriſt was, ἐκ Θεοῦ, of or from God; they ſubſtituted their own Comment, in the place of the Text; and required them to ſubſcribe, as to an article of Faith, under the penalty of an anathema; that Chriſt was *of* or *from* the *Subſtance* of *God:* ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Θεοῦ(*i*). Thus ſetting their own opinions upon a level with the Word of God.

It is true; the moſt learned and ſenſible of the *Homöouſians* were conſcious, that this proceeding was wrong: but probably they were overborne by votes, or perhaps by ſome other reaſon, to act contrary to their judgement. *Irenæus*, who lived before the Council of *Nice*;

(*i*) *Cudworth* Intel. Syſ. 608.

hath written a whole Chapter, to prove the Generation of the Son inexplicable: and all the Fathers ſince that time acknowledged it to be inſcrutable; neither known to Angels, nor Arch-angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers; but only to the Father who begat, and the Son who was begotten(*k*). *Alexander* of *Alexandria* tells us, that *John* concealed the Generation of the *Logos*; becauſe it was incomprehenſible to Men and Angels: and we cannot, without impiety, dive into the myſtery(*l*). *Baſil* ſays, we ought not to aſcribe any thing to God; but what is aſcribed to him *in the Scripture:* and ought not to ſpeak of God, but in *Scripture Terms*(*m*). *Euſebius* declares; that the confuſion and diſturbance, introduced into the Church, was owing to the uſe of unſcriptural phraſes(*n*). *Athanaſius* himſelf tells us, that the *Nicene* Council at firſt propoſed only to uſe ſcriptural words and phraſes againſt the *Arians*; as, that the Son was *of the Father*; and *Chriſt* was the Son of God: but, ſays *Athanaſius*, when they found that the *Euſebians*(*o*) would evade all theſe expreſſions by equivo-

(*k*) *Whitby* Diſ. mod. pref. xxvi.—*Iren.* l. ii. c. 48. p. 176. Edit. *Grabe.* (*l*) De Vera fide, 120.—*Burnet* againſt *Hill*, p. 48. (*m*) Contra *Eunom.* l. ii. p. 44.

(*n*) *Theod.* l. i. c. 12.

(*o*) The Faith of *Euſebius* of *Cæſarea* upon this ſubject was that of the moſt ancient Fathers: but, becauſe it confeſſed a Subordination of the Son to the Father, it is frequently

equivocation; [that is, when they found them ready to ſubſcribe to the words of Scripture, in a different ſenſe from their own;] they conceived themſelves neceſſitated more plainly to declare, what they meaned by the being *of* God, or *out of* God; and therefore added, that the Son was of the *Subſtance* of God(*p*). Thus we ſee the *Athanaſians* were not contented with a ſubſcription to the words of Scripture; which, they were conſcious, was the only ſubſcription they had any right to require: but inſiſted upon a ſubſcription to their own Interpretation and Comment; which they knew they had no right to do.

And not only private Men, but the Councils alſo, ſaw the inconvenience, if not the wickedneſs, of reſtraining the terms of Communion in this manner; as appears, from their endeavour to prevent others from doing the ſame; and ordering, in reſpect to ſome articles, that no farther addition ſhould be made: "like an in-

quently repreſented as *Arianiſm*; notwithſtanding it is founded upon the above and many other plain Texts of Scripture; and is fairly acknowledged by *Petavius*, *Cudworth*, *Huetius*, *Jurieu*, &c. to have been the general opinion of Antiquity; long before *Arius* was born.—So that men have for many ages been afraid to maintain the Supremacy of the Father; for fear of being looked upon as *Arians*. And yet they dare not deny, that the greateſt of all natural Perfections belongs to the Father *only*; and that is, UNORIGINATE SELFEXISTENCE.—Let. I. Note X.

(*p*) *Cudworth*, 608.

"tempe-

" temperate Father; who, becauſe he knows he " does ill, enjoins temperance to his Sons; but " continues to be intemperate himſelf(q)."

But their Example prevailed above their Precepts; and ſucceeding Councils ſaw, that they themſelves had the ſame right, authority, and power, to eſtabliſh the Pope's Supremacy, and the Worſhip of Images; that the *Nicene* Council, or any other, had to eſtabliſh the *homöouſian* doctrine.

The conduct of *Euſebius* was very extraordinary; upon this occaſion. He wrote to his Church, that he agreed to the anathema againſt *Arius*; becauſe he had uſed unſcriptural expreſſions: ſuch as theſe, that " there was [a " time] when the Son was not; and that he ex- " iſted, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων· and that he did not exiſt, before " he was begotten (r);" (phraſes, which he had certainly a right to uſe, in explaining his own meaning; though he had no authority to impoſe them as articles of Faith on other men:) and yet this ſame *Euſebius* ſigned to the unſcriptural word *homöouſios*, which was not only put into the *Nicene* Creed; but impoſed upon all Chriſtians, as an article of Faith, under an anathema. Upon which, I ſhall beg leave to quote the words of Dr. *Jer. Taylor*; as being directly in point—

(q) *Taylor*'s Lib. of Proph. ii. § 34, 31. (r) *Niceph.* viii. cap. 22.

" This

" This I ſay; not that I believe it unlawful " or unſafe for the Church, or any of the *An-* " *tiſtites Religionis*, or any wiſe man, to extend " his own Creed to any thing; that may cer- " tainly follow from any one of the articles " [which he believes]: but I ſay, that no ſuch " deduction is fit to be *preſſed* on others; *as an* " *Article of Faith:* and that every deduction, " that is ſo made, unleſs it be ſuch a thing as is " *at firſt* evident to *all*; is but ſufficient to make " a *Human* Faith, nor can it amount to a *Divine:* " much leſs can it be obligatory to bind a perſon " of a different perſuaſion to ſubſcribe, under " pain of loſing his Faith, or being a Heretic. " For it is a demonſtration; that nothing can " be neceſſary to be believed, under pain of " damnation; but ſuch propoſitions, of which " it is *certain*, that God hath ſpoken and taught " them to us; and of which it is *certain*, that " this is the ſenſe and purpoſe. For, if the " ſenſe be uncertain, we can no more be obliged " to believe it in a *certain* ſenſe; than we are " obliged to believe it at all, if it were not *cer-* " *tain*, that God delivered it. But if it be only " certain, *that God ſpake it*; and not certain, *to* " *what Senſe*; our Faith is to be as indetermi- " nate, as its Senſe. And it can be no other, " in the Nature of the Thing; nor is it conſo- " nant to God's Juſtice to believe of him, that " he can or will require more.—And this I alſo affirm;

"affirm; although the Church of any one de-
"nomination, or repreſented in a Council,
"ſhall make the deduction or declaration(s)."

However, it was by the Authority of the Church, repreſented in a Council; that *human* Articles were firſt ſet upon a level with the Word of God: and an example was given to all ſucceeding generations; to add what they pleaſed to the words of Scripture, by way of comment; and then eſtabliſh that comment, by an arbitrary decree. And though perhaps it may be ſaid; that they *meaned no harm*, they only *explained* the words of Scripture, they only *guarded* againſt Hereſy, they only *added* the ſingle word *Subſtance*, to *aſcertain* the ſenſe which they believed to be orthodox; yet, as this doctrine was enforced by Violence, it was followed by a ſcene of Blood and Cruelty, that almoſt ruined the whole Chriſtian Church. This was the firſt public and open Apoſtaſy of the Church, from the Word of God to the determinations of Men; and proved the ſeed, the root, the foundation of all the eſtabliſhed Errors, which have from that time to this infeſted the Chriſtian Faith. The Criterion of Truth and Orthodoxy was no longer confined to the *Scripture*; or *Chriſtian Verity:* But an *other* Rule of Faith ſprung-up, founded upon Tradition and the Decrees of Councils; which

(s) *Taylor's* Lib. of Proph. ſect. i. 12.

was

was called the *Catholic Religion:* and theſe two Rules of Faith frequently contradicted one another, in ſuch material articles; as at length divided the Church into what *may be* called two different Religions.—The *Papiſts*, adhering to Tradition and the Decrees of the Church; maintained all the Errors, that had been introduced by thoſe means: ſuch as prayers for the Dead, prayers to Saints and Angels, the worſhip of Images, Tranſubſtantiation, and other Errors unknown to the Chriſtian Verity, or Scripture. And the *Proteſtants*, on the other hand, adhering to the *Chriſtian Verity*, rejected all theſe doctrines; and thereby got rid of numberleſs abſurdities and contradictions: but, as they did not keep ſtrictly to the firſt Principle of their Reformation, in receiving the Scripture or *Chriſtian Verity* as the *only* Rule of Faith; but unadviſedly joined with it the decrees of the four firſt General Councils, (commonly ſo called) and other Articles of human compoſition, not expreſſed in Scripture Terms; they ſtill continue entangled in many inconſiſtences and contradictions, wherever theſe *different* Rules of Faith happen to diſagree. An inſtance of the miſchief which has ariſen from hence to the Chriſtian Religion, will appear very manifeſtly in the next Chapter; with regard to the *homöouſian* doctrine.—

CHAPTER II.

That the Homöouſian *doctrine is inconſiſtent with the Sufferings of Chriſt, and his Deſcent from Heaven; as revealed in the New Teſtament, and underſtood by the primitive Chriſtians: and is only ſupported by the arbitrary decrees of the* Homöouſian *Councils.*

WHILE the metaphyſical queſtion, concerning the eternal Generation of the Son from the Father's *Subſtance*, went no farther than the Learned; and Chriſtians did not draw Conſequences from it, which ſubverted the fundamental Articles of Chriſtianity; it was of no great ſignification to the Body of the common people, how it was underſtood by the Learned: and therefore *Conſtantine*, in his excellent epiſtle to *Alexander* and *Arius*, calls it a vain queſtion; ill begun, and more unadviſedly publiſhed; a fruitleſs controverſy, the product of idle hours; a matter ſo nice, ſo obſcure, ſo intricate; that it was neither to be explained by the Clergy, nor underſtood by the Laity; but moſt dangerous, when taught, leaſt it ſhould introduce Diſcord or Blaſphemy(*a*).—But ſince this and ſuch like queſ-

(*a*) *Socrat.* Eccl. Hiſt. B. I. ch. vii.—*Taylor*'s Lib. of Proph. ſect. ii. No. 26.—See *Append.* No. IV.

tions

tions have been made the Teſts of Hereſy; and the lives and liberties of the common people are concerned in them, as is the caſe in *England*; and the diſcord and blaſphemy, which the Emperor foretold, have been long ago introduced into the Church; it is high time to examine this queſtion to the bottom: and not be afraid to be looked-upon as raſh and inconſiderate, upon that account: ſince nothing of a more dangerous nature can poſſibly ariſe from our Inquiries; than from ſuffering an opinion to go-on in the Church unqueſtioned, from which even thoſe, who call themſelves the Orthodox, have drawn ſuch concluſions, as contradict the plaineſt and moſt fundamental Articles of the New Teſtament: as hath been already obſerved, in the Poſtſcript to the third Letter.

It is not ſo great a wonder, that the *homöouſian* doctrine was at firſt admitted into the Church; as that it was continued, after Chriſtians were ſenſible of its fatal conſequences. For, when it was firſt introduced, many believed, according to the Philoſophy then in faſhion; not only that the Son of God; but Angels alſo, and the Souls of Men were *conſubſtantial* with God; and generated from the divine Subſtance(*b*): and for a long time Chriſtians

(*b*) *Cicero* ſays; audiebam *Pythagoram*, *Pythagoreosque* incolas pene noſtros, qui eſſent *Italici* Philoſophici quon-

Chriſtians did not ſeem to apprehend, that any thing would be concluded from this doctrine; contrary to the deſcent of *Chriſt* from Heaven, or his Sufferings for Mankind. But after Chriſtians began to examine more ſtrictly and philoſophically into the conſequences of it, they found themſelves involved in unſuſpected and inextricable difficulties: for, if the Souls of Men were *conſubſtantial* with God; it followed, from the Principles of the *Athanaſians*; that the Souls of Men were God: for the *Athanaſians* held, that whatſoever is *conſubſtantial* with God, is God(*c*). It followed alſo, with regard to *Jeſus Chriſt*; that, if He was *conſubſtantial* with the Father; he muſt be impaſſible, and incapable of local motion; and conſequently, in direct contradiction to the

dam nominati, nunquam dubitâſſe; quin ex univerſamente divina delibatos animos haberemus. *Cato Maj.* c. 21. And *Epiphanius* ſays; Particulam quandam Dei, eamque immortalem eſſe prædicant *Stoïci*. Her. v. p. 12.

Tertullian ſays; Tu non tantum factus, ſed ex ipſius (Dei) Subſtantia animatus, adv. *Prax.* c. 5.—And *Jerom* tells us; that *Origen* taught, omnes rationales Naturas, i. e. Patrem, Filium & Spiritum S. Angelos, Poteſtates, Dominationes, cæteraſque Virtutes, ipſum quoque Hominem ſecundum animæ dignitatem unius eſſe Subſtantiæ. Epiſt. ad *Avit.*—And *Lactantius* ſays; denique omnibus Angelis, quos idem Deus de Spiritu ſuo figuravit. Epiſt. cxlii. Edit. *Davis.*

Reply to *Waterland*'s Def. 55, 285, 266, 328.

(*c*) *Cudworth*, 608 to 611.

New

New Teſtament, he could neither deſcend from Heaven, nor ſuffer on the Croſs.

The firſt of theſe notions, viz. that the Souls of Men were *conſubſtantial* with God, was ſo palpably abſurd; that by degrees it grew out of faſhion: but the *Conſubſtantiality* of the Son continued to be an article of Faith, both among the ancients and moderns.

However, the *Antenicenes* were ſo far from holding the conſequences of this doctrine, which have been ſince admitted; that they believed the Son to be finite, viſible and paſſible: as appears by ſeveral quotations from them, in the third Letter. And Biſhop *Bull* confeſſes fairly; that almoſt all the Catholic Writers, before the days of *Arius*, ſeem not to have known any thing of the Inviſibility or Immenſity of the Son of God: and ſpeak of him in ſuch a manner; as if, even in reſpect of his divine nature, he was finite, viſible, and confined in place. For, when they would prove; that the Perſon, who appeared and converſed with the Patriarchs, was the Son of God; they generally made uſe of this disjunctive argument: He, who was then ſeen, was either the Son of God; or a created Angel; or God the Father—That he was not a created Angel, they concluded; becauſe he was ſtiled by the Holy Ghoſt, *Jehovah*; or *God:*

God:—that He was not the Father, they prove; becauſe the Father is immenſe, filling all places, and circumſcribed by none—for which reaſon it is impious to entertain a thought, that he appeared in any place and ſmall corner of the Earth:—and by the ſame argument they teach, that the Son is viſible(*e*).

Biſhop *Bull*, who believed the Son to be equally immenſe and omnipotent as the Father(*f*); makes a faint effort to get rid of this argument, which the primitive Fathers made uſe of; by ſaying, "Perhaps they meaned no more; than only that the Son condeſcended to appear, by ſome *external Symbols* of his Preſence(*g*)." But what a palpable Evaſion muſt this have been; when Chriſt appeared ſo often to *Moſes*, as a man; and ſpake to him face to face, as a man ſpeaketh to his Friend(*b*)?—Was this no more than an external Symbol? was it not a perſonal appearance?—However, the Biſhop immediately anſwers his own Objection; and replies very juſtly—"If the ap-"pearance [they ſpeak of] was only by Sym-"bols; even God the Father, it might be "thought, might equally in this manner have "manifeſted himſelf to men; without any di-

(*e*) *Bulli* op. p. 267.—Let. I. p. 57. (*f*) *Bulli* op. p. 267, 272. (*g*) Certis quibuſdam in locis ſenſibilia ſuæ Præſentiæ & Symbola & Signa exhibuiſſe. (*b*) Ex. xxxiii. 2.

"minu-

"minution of his Majeſty." To which he gives no other anſwer, but only tells us flatly, that truly the primitive Fathers think otherwiſe: for, in their opinion, God the Father never was, nor ever could be, ſeen of any one; not even by any aſſumed Symbols of his preſence(*i*): And this doctrine of the Son's Viſibility and finite Nature, Biſhop *Bull* tells us, runs through the writings not of a few; but almoſt all the primitive Fathers before *Arius*(*k*).

The Biſhop here affects a ſtrange ſurprize, that the *Ante-nicene* Fathers ſhould ſpeak in this manner; and cries out, *ad iſta dicta Patrum quis non obſtupeſcat!* But the wonder lies on the other ſide of the queſtion; viz. how the *Nicenes* could venture to introduce a doctrine into the Church; ſo directly oppoſite to the primitive Faith, and the plain doctrine of the New Teſtament. For the *Antenicenes* believed, that the Son of God was the Angel of the Covenant (*l*); and, conſequently, both *paſſible* (*m*) and capable of *local motion*. And this ancient Faith continued in repute among the Chriſtians; till *Auſtine*, obſerving that it was inconſiſtent with the *homoöuſian* Doctrine eſtabliſhed at *Nice*, did all he could to confute it, and eſtabliſh the *homöouſian* doctrine in its ſtead: which led the Chriſtians into inſuperable difficulties. For it

(*i*) *Bulli* Op. 268, 275. (*k*) *Ib.* 267. (*l*) Let. I. Note XIV. (*m*) Let. I.

followed

followed undeniably; that, if *Jeſus Chriſt* was of the *infinite* and *impaſſible* Subſtance; he could neither deſcend from Heaven, nor ſuffer for Mankind: And yet both theſe doctrines are ſo plainly revealed in Scripture; that nothing can be plainer: and therefore the *Homoöuſians*, not daring to deny them in plain and direct words, were obliged to do it indirectly; and in obſcure terms. And it will require ſome pains to follow them through all the ſophiſtry which they have uſed upon this occaſion.

To account for the Sufferings of *Chriſt*, conſiſtently with his *Impaſſibility*, they tell us; that it was not that Subſtance, which was in the beginning with God, that felt the pains of the Croſs; but another Spirit or Soul, which animated the ſame Body, and was joined to the *Logos* by a *hypoſtatic* union; and therefore was the ſame Perſon. But this is impoſſible to be true; becauſe the one was in the beginning with God, and the other was created 4000 years after the World began: and if it can be ſaid, that he who was in the beginning with God, is the ſame perſon with him who was not in the beginning with God; there is no ſenſe in Words. It will therefore be ſufficient to anſwer; that, if it was the *Soul* alone that *felt* the Pain, it was the *Soul* alone that *ſuffered*; and not the Second Perſon in the Trinity, but a mere Man; which is *Socinianiſm*.—We ſhall ſee preſently,

preſently, by what Sophiſtry they endeavoured to evade the force of this argument; telling us that though he did not ſuffer in his *Subſtance*, yet he ſuffered in his *Perſon*: which ſhall be conſidered in its place.

As to the ſecond difficulty, (viz. how the Son of God could deſcend from Heaven, if he was the *infinite* and *indiviſible* Subſtance of the Father;) the *Homöouſians* have not been able to give any conſiſtent anſwer at all; ſometimes they deny the poſſibility of it, and ſometimes aſſert it (*n*): and ſometimes they tell us, that Chriſt deſcended from Heaven only in Energy; as Biſhop *Bull* ſpeaks: and that he emptied himſelf of his glory in APPEARANCE; as Dr. *Waterland* expreſſes it(*o*). But this notion, as it is a direct contradiction to the whole Goſpel Hiſtory; is no leſs ſo, to the doctrine of the *Hypoſtatic Union*: for, if Chriſt did not *actually* and *perſonally* deſcend from Heaven, to animate the Body of the *Meſſiah*; there could be no ſuch Union formed between the *Logos* and the human Soul, as that Hypotheſis requires, and ſuppoſes. And, if he did deſcend *actually* and *perſonally*; he could not be the *infinite Subſtance* of the Father.

Biſhop *Pearſon*, another Writer generally looked-upon to be Orthodox, boldly aſſerts;

(*n*) Let I. p. 210. (*o*) *Waterland*'s Defence, p. 17. —Reply to it, p. 59.

that *Chriſt* could not ſuffer any thing, except in *Body* or *Soul* (*p*); and by the word *Soul*, he means a Spirit which never exiſted before the Conception of the Virgin *Mary*: but this is directly aſſerting; that the *Logos* or *Word*, which was in the beginning with God, did not ſuffer at all: for that *Word* or Son of God, the Second Perſon of the Trinity, moſt certainly was neither that Soul nor Body. According to this notion therefore, no other *Being* ſuffered; but a Man, ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος· which is *Socinianiſm*.

On the other hand, the Biſhop finds himſelf in danger of falling into the Hereſy of the *Patripaſſians*; and warns us againſt it: but *too late*, to be of any ſervice to us. "We muſt "take heed," ſays his Lordſhip, "leſt we con-"ceive; that, becauſe the *divine* nature belong-"eth to the Father, *to which* the human nature "is joined; therefore the Father ſhould be *in-carnate*, or *conceived*, or *born* (*p*)." This caution, I ſay, comes too late; *after* admitting, that the human nature or ſubſtance is joined to the nature or ſubſtance which belongeth to the Father: for if the divine ſubſtance is *inſeparable* in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; it follows unavoidably; that, when the ſubſtance of the *Son* was *incarnate*; the *Father* and the *Holy Ghoſt* muſt alſo have been *incarnate*: and all the care

(*p*) See *Pearſon* on the Creed, p. 158, 163, 387.

in

in the World afterwards is too late to prevent the Conſequence.

The Biſhop himſelf owns, *as to the ſubſtance of Chriſt*; that, if the divine nature, by which he means the ſubſtance of the Father, had been the ſubject of *Chriſt*'s paſſion; then muſt the Father and Spirit have ſuffered: and from thence he concludes, that the ſubſtance or Eſſence of the Son could *not* ſuffer; becauſe then the Father and Holy Spirit muſt have ſuffered: And it muſt be owned; that, if the Son be of the ſame ſubſtance with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt; this muſt have been the Conſequence. And from thence it is natural to conclude; that if *Chriſt alone* did ſuffer, the Subſtance of the Father and Holy Ghoſt was not the ſubject of his paſſion: but ſome other ſubſtance, which was capable of ſuffering, as well as different and diſtinct from the ſubſtance of the Father and Holy Ghoſt.

2dly. The Biſhop agrees in this conſequence; and urges, that the Subſtance which ſuffered was the human nature *only*. But this could not be: becauſe the human nature *only* was not the Word of God, who was in the beginning with God; but a mere Man, or human Soul. As certainly therefore as the Son or Word of God was crucified, and the Son *alone*; as certainly as the Son was incarnate, and the Son *alone*; ſo certainly the ſufferings of Chriſt were neither

the ſufferings of the Father's ſubſtance, nor the ſufferings of a mere Man.

3dly. If it was neither the ſubſtance of the Soul, or human nature *only*, that ſuffered: nor the ſubſtance of the Supreme God, which is impaſſible: the ſubject of his paſſion muſt be his *own divine ſubſtance*, different and diſtinct from both; the very *ſame* ſubſtance, that exiſted in the beginning with God; and *deſcended* from Heaven to become incarnate; which the ſubſtance of the Father was *incapable* of doing; and the human Soul *did not* do.

To get clear of this conſequence, another Sophiſm is invented: The Biſhop ſays; "Al- "though the *human* nature [or ſubſtance] was "conjoined with the *divine*, *which* is *common to* "*the Father and the Son*; yet was the Union "made only in the *Perſon* of the Son, and not "in his *Subſtance*." But this is only aſſerting a thing in one breath, and denying it the next. For if the human nature or ſubſtance was joined to the divine nature or ſubſtance; and this divine nature or ſubſtance is common to the Father and the Son, *inſeparably* and *indiviſibly*; it follows, unavoidably; nay, it is aſſerting the very ſame thing in other Words to ſay, that the human nature or ſubſtance is joined to the Father; as well as to the Son: both of them being ſuppoſed in the propoſition to be *one* and the *ſame* indiviſible nature or ſubſtance.

But

But the Biſhop; in order to maintain at the ſame time, that the Son of God *did* ſuffer and *did not* ſuffer; or, in other Words, that the *Perſon* of the Son did ſuffer, and his *Subſtance* did not; tells us, that the Union between the human nature or ſubſtance, and the divine nature or ſubſtance, which is common to the Father and the Son, was made only in the *Perſon* of the Son; which is quite as unintelligible, as Tranſubſtantiation: for how two ſubſtances or natures can be joined together; not in *Subſtance*, but merely in the *Perſon* of *one* of the Subſtances; is all *Ægyptian* darkneſs, and a mere medley of Words without Ideas; which only ſerves to obſcure the Subject it endeavours to explain: viz. that the Word of God ſuffered in his *Perſon*, and not in his *Subſtance*.

But how is this aſſertion conſiſtent with what the Biſhop ſaid before; that Chriſt could not ſuffer, except in Body or Soul? for neither the *human Body*, nor the *human Soul*, nor *both* together, could be the *Perſon* of the *Logos*; who was in the beginning with God, the Second Perſon of the Trinity, the Lord from Heaven. It might alſo be urged; that it is not ſo much as probable, that there was any ſuch Union; any ſuch Soul; or that the *Body* of the *Meſſiah* was animated by any other *Spirit*, beſides the *Logos*(*q*). But be that as it may, and let the

(*q*) Letter I. p. 100, &c.

Union

Union between the *Logos* and the human Soul be ever ſo intimate; the *human Soul* can never become the *Second Perſon* of the Trinity, by ſuch Union; nor can the ſufferings of the one Perſon, who is *paſſible*, by any poſſibility in the nature of things, actually become the ſufferings of the other, who is ſuppoſed to be *impaſſible*: but, as their *Perſons* will be different and diſtinct, ſo will their *Feelings*.

But farther; the *Greek* Fathers of the ſecond and third ages make no mention of the *Eſſence* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; as being *diſtinct* from their *Perſons*: (for a *Perſon* is only an intelligent *Subſtance*:) nor does the New Teſtament know any ſuch language, or give the leaſt intimation of any thing done or ſuffered by a *Perſon*, diſtinct from the *Subſtance*. And beſides, ſuch a notion is not only inconceivable; but abſolutely contradictory to the *Athanaſian* Syſtem. For the three Perſons in the Trinity are declared by *Athanaſius* to be ὑπόστασις, ſubſtantial; and ſo ſays *Petavius*, and Biſhop *Bull*; and conſequently, if either of them ſuffers, it muſt be in their *Subſtances*; their *Perſons* abſtracted from their *Eſſences* being non-entities, and incapable of ſuffering. So that when it is ſaid, that the *Perſon* of Chriſt ſuffered in the *human nature* or *ſubſtance*; there can be no other meaning to the words than this; that the human nature or ſubſtance ſuffered or felt pain,

and

and conſequently, if *Chriſt* did not ſuffer or feel pain in his divine nature or ſubſtance; he who was in the beginning with God, did not ſuffer at all: but a mere Man. In ſhort, the *Perſon* of *Chriſt*, as Biſhop *Bull* obſerves, cannot be conceived; without his *Eſſence:* unleſs "you "define the word *Perſon* in divinity to mean "nothing elſe than a mere mode of Exiſtence, "τρόπον τῆς ὑπάρξεως· which is plainly *Sabellian-* "*iſm(r).*" And ſo; as Biſhop *Pearſon*'s firſt aſſertion ended in *Socinianiſm*, this ends in *Sabellianiſm.*

But, to come directly to the point, as it is revealed in Scripture: we find that *Jeſus Chriſt*, who had been in the form of God, (or in *Shechinah*) made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Man; and being found in faſhion as a Man, he humbled himſelf and became obedient unto death; even the death of the Croſs: wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name; that in the name of *Jeſus* every knee ſhall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue ſhould confeſs, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is *Lord*; to the Glory of God the Father(*s*).

(*r*) *Bulli* Op. p. 255. (*s*) *Phil.* ii. 7.—See page 733.

Here

Here we find no kind of intimation, that the deſcent of Chriſt from Heaven was only in Energy; nor that he emptied himſelf of his glory only in APPEARANCE; nor that it was a *human* Soul, which was joined to the *Logos*, that felt all the pain; nor that it was his *Perſon*, abſtracted from his *Eſſence*, that ſuffered for Mankind: but it appears to be the *ſame Jeſus, who had been in the Form of God*; that humbled himſelf, and became obedient to the death of the Croſs: and all this was done, to the end, that every tongue ſhould confeſs, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is *Lord*; to the glory of God the Father.—But no Evidence can be ſufficient, to overcome an inveterate Hypotheſis: and ſo all this doctrine is to be evaded, under the authority of the Council of *Nice*; which declares, that the *Logos* is *homöouſios* with the Father; and conſequently impaſſible. To which it will be proper, and I hope ſufficient, to anſwer, from the Texts of Scripture already quoted; as follows—

1. If the ſame *Jeſus*. who was in the form of God; could and did diveſt himſelf of his Glory, and take upon him the form of a Servant; he could not be of the ſame *Subſtance* with the Father; and conſequently might ſuffer pain: and therefore the notion of his Impaſſibility muſt be falſe; and the introduction of another Spirit, who ſhould feel all the pain: and the ſuppoſition, that the ſufferings of *Chriſt* were only in his

his *Perſon*, and not in his *Subſtance*; (which is mere Sophiſtry) ſuperfluous and unneceſſary.

2. It was foretold of *Chriſt*, that he ſhould *ſuffer*; and by the word *Chriſt* was mean'd the Lord from Heaven: but if the pains were only felt by a human Soul, how was this the ſufferings of *Chriſt?* or the Lord from Heaven?

3. The Glory of God conſiſted in his great Love to the World, in giving-up his *Son* to ſuffer for Mankind; and by his *Son* is mean'd his *Word:* but how does this great Love appear? or how does all that is here ſaid, tend to the Glory of God the Father; if the Sufferings were only felt by a human Soul, and not by his *Word?*

4. If it was not the *Chriſt* himſelf, who had been in the form of God, that performed all the things enumerated in theſe texts; they never were performed at all: and conſequently, Chriſt was not exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, in reward of obedience: for it is abſurd to ſuppoſe him rewarded for ſufferings which he never felt; and a humiliation, which he never underwent. Nor was it the Lord that bought us: and, as no other Spirit was capable of buying us, but he who paid the price both by his humiliation and ſufferings; we are unbought and unredeemed.

5. As no other being ever received the power to raiſe the dead; but that *Word* of God, who

came down from Heaven: and He received this power, in reward of his humiliation and ſufferings; becauſe he was the Son of Man: If it was not the ſame being, who ſuffered, and died, and roſe again; *our* hopes of a Reſurrection are vain. For, whatever other Spirit or Soul is ſuppoſed to be united to the *Logos*, and to have ſuffered and riſen again; *our* Reſurrection is no more connected with *his* death and ſufferings, than with the death and ſufferings of any *other* mere Man. Will any Chriſtian dare to aſſert; that the Atonement was made by a Perſon, who never exiſted till 4000 years after the Creation?

Biſhop *Pearſon* was ſenſible of this abſurdity; and expreſſes himſelf very ſtrongly upon it. He ſays; when *Chriſt* faſted, there was no other Perſon hungry; but *that Son of God that made the World*—when He ſat down *weary* by the well, there was no other Perſon felt that thirſt; but he that was eternally begotten of the Father, the Fountain of the Deity(*t*). When He was buffetted and ſcourged, there was no other Perſon ſenſible of thoſe pains; but that *eternal Word*, who before all worlds was *impaſſible:* when He

(*t*) In the 96th page of the Iſt. Letter, *Ben Mordecai* has, by miſtake, quoted theſe words, *the fountain of the Deity*, as mean'd of *Chriſt*; whereas they relate to the Father, and are in appoſition with the word Father: and accordingly are appropriated to the Father by Biſhop *Pearſon*, p. 37, 38.

was

was crucified and died, there was no other Perſon gave-up the Ghoſt; but the Son of him, and ſo of the ſame Nature with Him, that only hath Immortality(*u*).—Who can read this, and not believe; that the Perſon, who felt theſe pains, was the very ſame identical Being that was in the beginning with God? which is the true Scripture Doctrine. But the Biſhop means no ſuch thing: He has a ſophiſtical meaning to the word *Perſon*; he ſuppoſes the Son of God, who was in the beginning with God, to be the ſame Perſon with another Spirit; who had no exiſtence, till the year of the world 4,000: And accordingly he ſays, the *Word* was not ſubject to the ſuffering of the Fleſh it took; and that *Chriſt* could not ſuffer, except in Body or Soul; which manifeſtly excludes the ſufferings of the Son of God, or the *Logos*. Thus his Lordſhip, though in full poſſeſſion of Truth, gives it all up; for the ſake of maintaining the Son's *impaſſibility*, with which his *Suffering*, in any manner whatſoever, is abſolutely inconſiſtent.—Nay, even ſuppoſe it poſſible for a Being to ſuffer in *Perſon*, and not in *Subſtance*; and that the *Body* of the *Meſſiah* was animated by two different *Spirits*; yet this would not ſolve the difficulty: for it is impoſſible theſe two *Spirits* ſhould be the ſame identical *Perſon*. The Orthodox Notion allows two *Natures* or *Subſtances*

(*u*) *Pearſon*, 186.

in *Chriſt*, by the Council of *Chalcedon*; which is one of the Teſts of Orthodoxy in *England*. Now if both theſe *Natures* were conſcious; the one muſt be conſcious of its *Impaſſibility*, and the other of its *Paſſibility*: and conſequently, they muſt be different *Perſons*; and the hunger, or thirſt, or pain of the *paſſible* Perſon, could not poſſibly be the hunger, or thirſt, or pain felt by the *impaſſible* one.

But the Biſhop carries the Argument againſt himſelf ſtill farther: for he ſays; no other *Perſon* was ſenſible of the pain, but the *eternal Word*: &c. Now, if this was the Caſe; *the Soul*, which is ſuppoſed to be joined to the eternal *Word*, did not ſuffer; for that Soul was not the eternal Word: (notwithſtanding the confuſion that is made by uſing the word *Perſon* in different Senſes; ſometimes as the *Logos*, ſometimes as a human Soul joined to the *Logos*, and ſometimes for the whole Body compounded by both: and conſequently, the *Word* of God did not ſuffer at all; (according to this doctrine) either in Body or Soul.

The next Argument the Biſhop uſes to prove the *perſonal* ſufferings of a Being, whom he declares to be ſubſtantially or eſſentially *impaſſible*; is of a very extraordinary nature: For the force of it lies entirely in raiſing our opinion of his *Eſſence*, at the expence of his *Perſon*.

The

The Biſhop ſays, we muſt not think ſo *meanly* of the Eſſence of the Son; as to imagine it ſubject to the ſufferings of the Fleſh it took(*x*).—This, as I obſerved, is in the ſame ſtyle with the objection of the ancients; that it was below the dignity of *Chriſt* to weep. But where do the Chriſtians learn to make this unſcriptural diſtinction? or what can they mean, by allowing of ſhame and diſgrace, with regard to the *Perſon* of *Chriſt*; and denying it, as to his *Eſſence?* The Apoſtle ſpeaks in a very different manner; and tells us, that he was conſcious of the ſhame; and deſpiſed it: he endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame; and is ſet down at the right hand of God(*y*). Will the Chriſtians tell us, that the *divine Subſtance* of Chriſt did not endure the Croſs; and that it was the *human Nature* only, that was *crucified?* If ſo, how does this differ from the Hereſy of *Cerinthus?* and yet this is the doctrine of *Cyril* and the *Councils*.

The giving-up this article of Faith, upon which all our aſſurance of Redemption and hope of Immortality, as Chriſtians, is built; appears to be the greateſt Infatuation, that can be well conceived; (though it runs through all the ſects of the *Homöouſians:*) the true doctrine being ſo plain, and ſo frequently repeated in the New Teſtament; without one

(*x*) P. 187. (*y*) *Heb.* xii. 21.

hint

hint of his ſuffering, yet not feeling pain, or any other than the plain and literal meaning of the words; that it was the ſame Being, who was in the beginning with God, that ſuffered pain and death; and on the other hand, the metaphyſical objections authoriſed by the Council of *Nice*, are utterly unintelligible and inconceivable.

Now all theſe difficulties and inconſiſtences ariſe merely from the Change that was made in the Faith, by introducing the notion that the *Word* of God was *infinite* and *impaſſible*(z); for, if this be true, the whole hiſtory of the deſcent of *Chriſt* from Heaven, and of all that he performed on Earth from his birth to his crucifixion, muſt be falſe(*a*): as many of the moſt learned and orthodox of the Chriſtians have confeſſed(*b*). But however, it is upon the authority of this Hypotheſis, that the Council of *Chalcedon*, which is one of the Teſts of Orthodoxy in *England*, hath ventured to anathematiſe all ſuch, as believe the plain and obvious ſenſe of the Apoſtles Creed: *viz.* "that it was the Son of God, who ſuffered "under *Pontius Pilate:* expelling all thoſe "from the Convention of ſacred Perſons, who "audaciouſly aſſerted the Deity [*i. e.* the "Subſtance] of the only begotten who came "down from Heaven, to be *paſſible*(*b*)." And

(z) Let. I. p. 96, 203. (*a*) Let. III. Poſtſc.
(*bb*) *Evag.* lib. II. c. iv. p. 425.—*Niceph.* lib. XV. c. v.

Cyril,

Cyril, in his letter approved of by the Council, ſays; "we ſay, he ſuffered and roſe again; not "as if the Word, *as to its own nature*, ſuffered "either ſtripes, or the transfixing of the nails, "or any other wounds; for the Deity is *im-* "*paſſible*, becauſe it is incorporeal: But be- "cauſe the Body, which was properly *His*, "ſuffered; we ſay, the *Word* itſelf ſuffered: "for he was *impaſſible* in a *paſſible* Body(*c*)."

And again, he is thus quoted by *Aetius*; "Becauſe *his own Body*, as the Apoſtle *Paul* "ſays, taſted Death for men; the *Word itſelf* "is ſaid to have ſuffered Death for us. Not "that he experienced death, as to his *Nature*; "ἦκον εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν· for this would be ſhocking "to ſay: but, as I ſaid, his *Body* taſted "Death."

Upon which I would obſerve, firſt; that, if the Text here referred-to in St. *Paul*'s writings be *Heb.* xi. 9, there is not any thing ſaid about the *Body of Chriſt taſting Death*; but only about *Chriſt* himſelf, conſidered *perſonally*. "But we "ſee *Jeſus*—for the ſuffering of Death— "crowned—that *He* by the grace of God "ſhould taſte Death for every man."

Secondly, the Reaſon here given by *Cyril*, why the Deity of *Chriſt* is *impaſſible*, overturns the doctrine of the *Hypoſtatic* Union; for, if

(*c*) *Evag.* chap. xviii. p. 442.—*Niceph.* Lib. XV. c. xxx. p. 647.

the

the Deity is *impaſſible*, becauſe it is *incorporeal*; the human Soul muſt be *impaſſible*, for the ſame Reaſon: (except *Cyril* argues as a materialiſt; and ſuppoſes the human Soul to be corporeal in that ſenſe:) and conſequently, the human Soul, as it is called, could not ſuffer; any more than the Deity.

Epiphanius cenſures the opinion of the *Apollinariſts*, in the ſame way as *Cyril*; and ſays, They boldly declared, that the *Divinity* of *Chriſt* ſuffered(*d*). But if what *Epiphanius* has advanced a few pages before, is true(*e*); that God deſcended from Heaven; why might he not *ſuffer?* The *ſame Divinity* (underſtand it in what ſenſe you pleaſe), which is capable of *local motion*; muſt be alſo capable of *ſuffering:* The Supreme God is capable of neither. And the *Apollinariſts* think, they have the Scripture in proof of their opinion; that the Divinity of *Chriſt*, i. e. the *Word* or Son of God, ſuffered: and quote I *Cor.* i. 8. "If they had known, "they would not have crucified the Lord of "Glory." To which *Epiphanius* anſwers; that the *Divinity* was preſent, when *Chriſt* ſuffered in the *Fleſh*; that we might have Juſtification not only in the *Fleſh*, but in the *Divinity:* but the *Godhead* ſuffered not; (ἐκ καθ' ἑαυτὸν παθὼν) becauſe *immutable*, and *impaſſible*, and *conſubſtantial* with the Father. And he

(*d*) *Epiph.* Tom. II. p. 1026. (*e*) *Ibid.* p. 1023.

illuſtrates

illuſtrates his meaning by this inſtance: If our Garment is ſpotted with Blood, we ſay, the *Man* who wears it is ſpotted; though the ſpots do not reach the man's *Body:* So though the ſuffering does not reach the *Divinity*, but only the *human* Nature; [and no other *ſuffered*, but a Man;] yet we do not *attribute* the *Sufferings* to *that alone*, but to the *Divinity* alſo; [though we know it to be falſe.] Nor do we incur the curſe in Scripture; Curſed is every one, that putteth his truſt in *Man*; [i. e. the *ſufferings* of the *human* Nature:] becauſe the *ſuffering* is *imputed* to his *Divinity*, though the *Divinity* ſuffered not *in itſelf:* and the Salvation, which was gained by the paſſion of *Chriſt*, he ſays, is *attributed* by the holy Church of God to the *Divinity* alſo(*f*); [which they declare to be *incapable* of *ſuffering*.] Which amounts to this—that the Church *imputes* and *attributes* the *Sufferings* of *Chriſt* to the *Divinity*; though they know it to be falſe and impoſſible. This ſophiſtry has been already remarked and expoſed, in the firſt letter(*g*). I ſhall only obſerve at preſent;

1ſt. That the way of ſpeaking is abſolutely contradictory to itſelf. The Divinity did ſuffer; or it did not. If the *ſufferings* of *Chriſt* are *juſtly* and *truly* imputed and attributed to the *Divinity* by the Catholic Church, and not

(*f*) *Ibid.* 1027. (*g*) P. 124, &c.

only in words; then the Catholic Church agrees with the *Apollinariſts* in the very doctrine, for which it condemns them.

2. But if the Church does not *juſtly* and *truly* impute and attribute the *ſufferings* of *Chriſt* to his *Divinity*; as well in *Fact*, as in *Words*: then it believes the ſufferings of the Lord of Glory, the Word of God, the ſecond Perſon of the Trinity, no more than the *Mahometans* do. For if in *Chriſt* there are two *Natures*, the divine and human; each of which, conſidered diſtinct from the other, has all the Eſſentials of a *Perſon*: then in *Chriſt* there are two *Perſons*; the one of which ſuffered, and the other did not: And the Perſon that ſuffered was not the Lord of Glory, or the Word of God, or the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity; but a *mere Man*. The only difference is this; that the orthodox Chriſtians believe, the ſufferings to have been felt or undergone by *another* Perſon, *different* from the *Logos*, who at that time animated the ſame Body: And the *Mahometans* believe, they were felt or undergone by *another Perſon*; who did *not* animate the ſame Body: but neither of them believe, they were undergone by the *Word*; who was in the beginning with God.

3. If it was ſo ſhocking to believe, that the *Word* of God experienced Death; as *Cyril* repreſents it, agreeably to the doctrine of the *Coun-*

Councils, and in direct contradiction to *Scripture:* how must the Faith have been changed from what it was in the more primitive ages; as explained by *Irenæus* and *Justin Martyr!* The latter of whom declares, entirely inconsistently with all this new-invented Hypothesis, that the Son of God sweat, as it were, great drops of blood; when his heart trembled, and his bones in like manner, &c. that we might know it to be the *Father*'s will, that his *Son* should truly upon our account undergo such great *suffering*; and we should not say, [what the Fathers and the Councils of later ages *do* say; and it is Heresy now to deny:] that, because he was the Son of God, He did not feel these things which befel him(*b*).—*Lond.* Edit. p. 361, 362. See Let. I. Note XXV.

Having now shewn, that the *homöousian* Doctrine, a doctrine, which St. *Jerom* owns was unknown to the Apostles; is contrary both to the Scripture itself, and to the sense of it as understood by the most primitive Fathers; who believed the Son of God to have been *passible:* there remains no other Authority for it, but the arbitrary decrees of the *homöousian Councils.* And if so, it will be no difficult matter to support the cause of Christianity, *thus wounded in the house of its friends*; merely by inverting the argument: and whereas the *homöousians*

(*b*) P. 57.

aſſume, (without any authority from Scripture) that *Chriſt* is of the *ſame Subſtance* with the Father; which Subſtance is *impaſſible*, *infinite*, &c. and therefore could not ſuffer, nor deſcend from Heaven: I would on the contrary aſſume; that *Chriſt did* deſcend from Heaven, and *ſuffer*: and conſequently, according to their own Principles, was *not* of the ſame Subſtance with the Father; which is *infinite* and *impaſſible*. And I would prove *my* aſſumption, that *Chriſt* did actually deſcend from Heaven and ſuffer, from plain texts of Scripture; whereas the *homöouſians* have no proof of their aſſumption; viz. that the Son is of the *ſame Subſtance* with the Father; but their own arbitrary addition of the word *Subſtance* to the texts of Scripture which declare, that *Chriſt* is *of* or *from* God; and the decrees, that are founded upon that addition.

CHAPTER III.

The neceſſity of examining the different Senſes, in which the Homöouſian *doctrine is explained; and ſhewing them all to be indefenſible.*

HAVING proved in the laſt Chapter, that the *homöouſian* doctrine, upon which the whole proof of the Fecundity of the Father and the Generation of the Son from the paternal Sub-

Subſtance, is founded; is inconſiſtent with the moſt plain and fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity: it will be neceſſary, in order to confirm and corroborate what has been there ſaid, to examine that doctrine to the bottom; and prove it to be falſe, in every Senſe, in which it has been explained. And this will be the more neceſſary, as we ſhall frequently be obliged to quote the writings of the ancient Fathers upon the Subject; who make no ſcruple to ſupport that doctrine by any arguments they can find; whether conſiſtent or inconſiſtent, whether true or falſe.

Origen, *Methodius*, *Euſebius*, *Apollinaris*, ſays *Jerom*, have written much againſt *Celſus* and *Porphyry*: conſider, what arguments and doubtful problems they uſe, to overthrow the writings compoſed by the Spirit of the Devil; and becauſe they are conſtrained to ſay, not what they think, but what the diſpute requires; they confute the Gentiles(*a*). And in another place he ſpeaks in generals, "Eccleſiaſtici viri non "dogmatum cuſtodiunt veritatem; ſed de corde "ſuo confingunt, magiſtrumque habent pre-"ſumptionem ſuam(*b*)." From this falſe zeal proceeds that fallacious method of arguing upon the ſubject of the Trinity, which is taken notice of in the firſt Letter (*c*); a method,

(*a*) Bib. Univer. & Hiſt. Vol. x. p. 492. (*b*) *Jerom* on *Ezek.* 34. (*c*) Let. I. p. 73.

which

which no honeſt man would uſe; if he conſidered what he was about. For it is impoſſible that any man ſhould believe all the oppoſite explanations of the Trinity by the *Sabellians*, *Polytheiſts*, and *Athanaſians*, at the ſame time: and no man can have a right to anſwer the Objections, which are brought againſt his own Syſtem, upon the Principles of others, which he diſbelieves.—To argue in this double manner upon contradictory Principles, is as abſurd, as it would be to conclude, that the *horizontal* Moon appears larger, than when it is in the *meridian*; becauſe it is nearer: and of a deeper colour, becauſe it is farther off. Or, to mention an inſtance in fact, it is like *Bellarmine*'s preferring the Council of *Carthage* to that of *Laodicea*, becauſe it is later; and the Council of *Nice* to that of *Frankfort*, becauſe it is elder(*d*).—But no man would think of reaſoning thus, if he was ſincere in his reſearches; and did not rather aim at Victory than Truth.

But, to return to the Subject——In this diſpute between the *Athanaſians* and the *Arians*, it is obſerved by Biſhop *Bull*; (and the obſervation is very extraordinary;) that the *Arians*, who above all others oppoſed the *homöouſian* doctrine: would have agreed to any Catholic confeſſion of Faith, either from Scripture or Tradition; which had not the word *Homöouſios*

(*d*) *Taylor*'s Lib. of Proph. fol. 473.

in

in it: even though other words had been uſed, which among men of judgement ſignified the ſame thing(*e*). But this would not ſatisfy the *Athanaſians*: and *Ambroſe* ſays, the *Arians* would have uſed that word; if they could any way have perverted it: which they found impracticable; and therefore they never uſed it. And Biſhop *Bull* ſays, "In raiſing up this furious "heat in their breaſts upon account of this word "*Homöouſion*, theſe mad Men [the *Arians*] ſeem "to have acted like mad Dogs; who ſnarl at "their Chains, and endeavour in vain to bite "them with their teeth."—Is not this a ſtrange ſtory, that the *Arians* ſhould take an antipathy to a mere *Word*; and that this Word, though *unexplained*, ſhould chain them up ſo much tighter than any *other* words could do? and that the *Arians* ſhould be willing to ſubſcribe to the *Senſe* of the word: and object to the *Word itſelf*, and ſnarl at it?—

On the other hand we may aſk; what right had the *Athanaſians* to chain up their fellow Chriſtians to the uſe of a word, not uſed in Scripture; nor ſo much as defined or explained by themſelves?

(*e*) Quippe egregii illi ſimulandi, diſſimulandique artifices nullam plane loquendi formulam, quam ſive ex Scripturis, ſive ex Traditione deſumptam uſurparant Catholici, repudiarunt; præter hoc unam *Homöouſii* vocabulum. *Bulli* Op. 34. 285.

Perhaps

Perhaps it was this very chaining them up, that raiſed ſuch a furious heat in their breaſts; and made them *mad*, and *ſnarl*, and *bite*: for nobody can be expected to ſubmit patiently to be chained up; when he knows, that he has a right to his Liberty. But admitting that the *Athanaſians* had a right to chain up the *Arians*: yet what could they mean, by refuſing to *explain* the word, to which they required a Subſcription? or why were they not content with the *Arians'* ſubſcribing to the *Senſe* of it? Is not this whole account very myſterious and ſuſpicious? And does it not look, as if the *Athanaſians* were conſcious, that the *Arian* Faith, in this particular was not contrary either to Scripture or Antiquity?

But in truth, the whole Story is mere Fallacy and Impoſition; the words of *Arius*, in his Epiſtle to Biſhop *Alexander*, are plainly directed, not againſt the *Word*; as if there was any *Charm* in it: but againſt the *Senſe* of it. "If, "ſays *Arius*, we underſtand the expreſſions, *I* "*came forth, or I come from the bowels of* "*the Father*, as a part of the *homöouſion*, or "an emiſſion or production, as ſome do; "the Father muſt be compounded, diviſible "and mutable(*f*)."—That the *Arians* had an averſion to the word *homöouſios*, is true; but this was not like the Hydrophoby in mad dogs

(*f*) See Appendix, No. I.

which

which is not to be accounted for; and *Socrates* has given us the reaſon of their diſlike: it was becauſe they look'd upon thoſe who approved of the word, as favouring the opinions of *Sabellius* and *Montanus*; and therefore they called them Blaſphemers, as being perſons who deſtroy'd the exiſtence of the Son (*g*): and that this was the reaſon why *Euſtathius* was depoſed, is aſſerted by St. *George*, the patron Saint of *England*; in his encomium upon *Euſebius Emiſenus* (*h*).—The fact ſeems to be this; the *Athanaſians* ſaw, that there were two large parties of the Chriſtians, who would vote with them, if the word *homöouſios* was kept to; and would immediately deſert them, as ſoon as it ſhould be explained in the *Athanaſian* ſenſe of it.—One of theſe Parties was the *Sabellians*, the followers of *Paulus Samoſatenus*; for we find, by the account which is given us by *Socrates*, concerning the diſputes between the Biſhops after the Council of *Nice*; that thoſe who were for the word *Homöouſios* were cenſured as *Sabellians*: and both *Athanaſius* and *Hilary* own, that the word was uſed by *Paulus Samoſatenus* in a *Sabellian* ſenſe (*i*).

(*g*) *Soc.* Lib. I. ch. xxiii. This diſpute, we are told by *Nicephorus*, was carried on like a battle in the dark: for they did not ſo much as underſtand one another upon thoſe ſubjects, upon which they accuſed one another of Blaſphemy. *Nic.* Lib. VIII. c. 45. (*h*) *Ibid.* c. xxiv.

(*i*) *Sandius* Enuc. Hiſt. p. 192.—*Athan.* & *Hilary* de Synodis.

It is therefore indiſputable, that the *Sabellians* could ſubſcribe to the word *homöouſios*; though not to the *Athanaſian* ſenſe of it. And all thoſe, who believed with *Gregory Nyſſen*, &c. that the three Perſons of the Trinity exiſted ſeparately; and yet were One God, becauſe they were all of the *ſame generical Subſtance*; and interpreted the word, in that ſenſe; could have no objection to it. And beſides theſe, all ſuch as believed that Angels and the Souls of Men were conſubſtantial with God; as the *Platoniſts*, who believed they were formed out of the eternal *Pſyche*; and the followers of *Pythagoras*; would form another Party, as well as the *Stoics*, in favour of the ſame word(*k*). And all theſe, as long as the word *homöouſios* continued unexplained, were a great majority againſt the *Arians*. So very contrary is the true ſtate of the caſe from what Biſhop *Bull* has repreſented it to be, in his ſtory of the mad Dogs. For he tells us, that the word *homöouſios* was ſo determinate; as to exclude all ambiguity(*l*): whereas it was nothing but the ambiguity of the word, which occaſioned it being inſiſted upon; rather than the ſenſe and meaning of it. For as ſoon as it was explained we find,

(*k*) See back, chap. II, Note (*b*). (*l*) Quippe cujus vocis (*Homöouſion*) ἀκρίβεια et exquiſita ratio omnem ἀμφιβολίας aditum ipſis [*Arianis*] præcluderent. *Bulli* op. 34.

1ſt,

1ſt, That what the *Sabellians* meaned, was one numerical Subſtance to the three Perſons.

2. What *Cyril*, *Gregory Nyſſen*, &c. meaned, was three Subſtances of the ſame kind, ſeparately exiſting; as *Peter*, *James*, and *John*.

3. What the *Athanaſians* meaned, was three Subſtances of the ſame kind, joined together by an *Emperichoreſis*(*m*).

Now of all theſe different Sects, there is but one that maintains both the Unity and the Trinity at the ſame time; and that is the *Athanaſian*. The doctrine of *Sabellius* admits of no *real* and *perſonal*, but only a *nominal* Trinity; for it only ſuppoſes one Subſtance to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt(*n*): and accordingly, the *Sabellians* allow of no generation from the paternal Subſtance. But this Sect of Chriſtians muſt be greatly erroneous; becauſe their Hypotheſis is entangled with ſuch conſequences as theſe: viz. that the Father's begetting a Son was nothing but one [character] name, notion, or mode of the Deity; begetting another name, notion, or mode of the Deity; or the ſame Deity under one notion begetting itſelf under another notion(*o*). In ſhort, it muſt follow, according to the *Sabellian* Syſtem; that it was only a name or notion or character, and not any real ſubſtantial

(*m*) Let. I. p. 60, &c. (*n*) Let. I. p. 26.
(*o*) *Cudworth*, 605.

Being or Subſtance, that ſuffered for Mankind—But this, as *Athanaſius* obſerves, is only a Trinity of Names and Words; whereas the Trinity is a Trinity of Subſtances or Hypoſtaſes really ſubſiſting(*p*). And again *Athanaſius* obſerves, that this notion deſtroys the Eſſence of the Son; and therefore he calls theſe Chriſtians *Tautöouſians*, and *Monöouſians*(*q*).

On the other hand, the *Pſeudo-athanaſians* declare with *Cyril*, *Gregory Nyſſen*(*r*), &c. that each of the three Perſons of the Trinity is God himſelf; and conſequently, each of them muſt be a diſtinct and ſeparate Subſtance, ſelf-exiſtent, and unoriginate: which is *Polytheiſm*. Biſhop *Bull* ſays, "neque in ſacra Triade altera "Perſona ab altera ſeparari poſſunt; ſicut tres "humanæ Perſonæ aut alterius alicujus ſpeciei "ſuppoſita ab invicem determinantur: qui "enim hoc modo tres divinitatis Hypoſtaſes "exiſtimant, merito *Tritheiſtæ* appellantur." And *Athanaſius* ſays, we do not acknowledge three Hypoſtaſes divided or ſeparate; as is to be ſeen corporally in men: that we may not comply with the heathen *Polytheiſm*. Theſe therefore admit of no Unity. So that both a Unity and Trinity are only preſerved by the *Athanaſians*; and they preſerve it merely by the

(*p*) *Ibid.* 612.—Let. I. 67. (*q*) Let. I. p. 166.
(*r*) Let. I. p. 62.

Emperi-

Emperichoreſis, which joins the three Subſtances together.—For the *Athanaſian* Faith, as it was ſettled at the Council of *Nice*; which is one of the firſt four general Councils eſtabliſhed by the Laws of *England* as the Standards of Orthodoxy; is thus, according to *Athanaſius*; that there are three diſtinct Subſtances to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; which conſtitutes the *Trinity:* And theſe three are joined together by an *Emperichoreſis*; which conſtitutes the *Unity*. So that the *Unity* of God is entirely dependent on the *Emperichoreſis*; which ties the three Subſtances together. And accordingly *Baſil*, *Ambroſe*, *Jerom*, &c. imagined that they found this Myſtery in the words of *Eccleſ.* iv. 12. a *Threefold Cord* is not quickly broken. And Biſhop *Bull*, who was a real *Athanaſian*, calls this *Emperichoreſis* a Myſtery above all Myſteries. But the pretended *Athanaſians* of the preſent age ſeem wholly to have diſcarded it: they content themſelves with the name of *Athanaſians*; but not a man of them has ſtep'd forth in defence of this important Doctrine; though it is this Doctrine alone, that prevents the *Athanaſians* from being *Polytheiſts*; as *Athanaſius* himſelf plainly declares, in the words juſt quoted: whereas the preſent *Athanaſians* maintain a mere jumble of *Socinian*, *Sabellian*, and *Pſeudo-Athanaſian* doctrines all together; which is as different from the genuine Principles of

Athana-

Athanaſius and the *Nicene* Fathers, as it is from *Arianiſm*.

Now this *Emperichoreſis* or *Circumince ſſion* is explained by *Genebrand*, according to Biſhop *Bull*, as follows; "It is that, by which one thing "exiſts in another; not only by participation "of nature, but alſo by full and intimate pre- "ſence. This kind of inexiſtence, as I may ſay, "we call *Circumince ſſion*; becauſe by that, ſome "things, though ever ſo diſtinguiſhed from each "other without ſeparation, are in one another "without confuſion: and do, *as it were*, pene- "trate and enter one another(*r*)." *Bellarmine* defines it to be "the intimate and perfect reſi- "dence or inhabitation of one thing in ano- ther(*s*)." And agreeably to this *Cyril* ſays, the Father is the natural place of the Son (*t*): and *Damaſcen* ſays, "there is no local diſtance in "the uncircumſcribed Deity, as in Us; ſo that "they are in one another, not ſo as to be con- "founded together; but to adhere." *Baſil* ſuppoſes it to be "a kind of ſeparate conjunc- "tion:" and *Hilary* ſuppoſes it not to be "a "coherence, but exiſtence by a unity of inſe- "parable nature(*t*)." Another explanation of it the Biſhop gives us in the words of St. *Am- broſe*; which is well worth the reading, if it

(*r*) *Geneb.* Lib. II.—*Bulli* op. 285. (*s*) *Ibid.* 288. (*tt*) *Ibid.* 289.

were

were only to ſee what ſtrange things learned men will admire.

" Principii Unitatem & Perichoreſin brevi & " arguta oratione ſic amplectitur *Ambroſius*(*u*), " in libro de dignitate conditionis humanæ—

" Ideo autem dicitur Deus Pater, quia ipſe " eſt ex quo; & ſapientia eſt, qua ordinantur " omnia; & dilectio, qua ſe volunt omnia ita " manere ut ordinata ſunt. Ex quo ergo, & " qui ex eo, & quo ſe diligunt ipſa duo, tria " ſunt; & illa tria ideo unum, quia ſic ſunt ex " uno illa duo, ut tamen ob eo non ſint ſepa- " rata: ſed *ex* ipſo ſunt, quia non a ſe; & *in* " ipſo, quia non ſeparata; & ipſum ipſa quod " ipſe, & ipſum ipſe quod ipſa: & non ipſum " ipſa qui ipſe; & non ipſa ipſe quæ ipſa."— And *Damaſcen* ſays; " though every one of the " three Perſons ſubſiſts of itſelf, or is a *perfect* " *Subſtance*; and has its own Property, or *dif-* " *ferent manner* of Exiſtence; yet they are uni- " ted in Eſſence and natural Property: and in " that they are not ſeparated nor recede from " the Father's Subſtance, they are and are cal- " led one God(*x*)." And Biſhop *Bull* and *Petavius* ſay the ſame. And Dr. *Waterland* ſays, the Subſtance of the one Perſon is not the Subſtance of the others; but different, however of the ſame kind, or united to them(*y*).

(*u*) Cap. ii.—*Bulli* op. 289.—Def. fid. *Nic.* c. iv. ſect. 13. (*x*) *Ibid.* 288. (*y*) Let. I. p. 61.

But

But Dr. *Whitby* takes this whole doctrine to be a mere invention, in order to ſupport the *homöouſian* Hypotheſis; and aſks, where hath the Scripture ſpoken of this wonderful *Emperichoreſis* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; which the *Poſt-nicenes* ſpeak of with ſuch Confidence and Aſſurance (z)? And, though it could be proved; yet he denies that it would ſerve the end propoſed by it: for that three Eſſences cannot become one, by being cloſely joined and connected; but only three Eſſences, joined and connected (*a*). And we may argue in the ſame manner upon what *Tertullian* ſays, when he deſcribes the Trinity to be "una Subſtantia in tribus cohærentibus." For what does this mean, but three Subſtances joined together into one; as the Fathers underſtood the text in *Eccleſiaſtes*, of a threefold Cord? And ſo in the ſecond chapter he ſays, in the Trinity there is *Number* without *Diviſion*; which comes to the ſame thing: and he explains this farther, when he ſays, that the three ſo connected are not *unus*, but *unum* (*b*).

But the worſt Conſequence of this doctrine is, that it ſupplies the Infidel with an argument againſt the neceſſary Exiſtence of God. For neceſſary Exiſtence requires both *Unity* and *Simplicity*:

(z) *Whitby*'s Laſt Thoughts; p. 29, 30. (*a*) *Ibid.* p. 6. (*b*) *Tertul* adv. *Prax.* c. 12.

plicity: whereas three Perſons joined together, *one* of them *unoriginate*, and *two originate*; will anſwer neither of theſe requiſites. Nor can the whole *Homöouſion* be unoriginate. Beſides, as the neceſſity of a *Perichoreſis* can by no means be proved; it may perhaps ceaſe to exiſt; and the Unity ceaſe with it: ſo that, though there is but One God, now; there may be Three, ſome time hence. And in truth, if we believe the Fathers, the *Perichoreſis* itſelf has not been of very long continuance: for the three Subſtances could not be joined together, before they exiſted: and they could not exiſt, till the Generation of the Son: for *Athanaſius* tells us, that the Generation of the Son was the origin of his Subſtance (*c*); and that he exiſted before his Generation: and if ſo, he exiſted before the *Perichoreſis* began. How long it was before, he does not ſay; but the Antenicene Fathers in general agree, that his Generation was but a little before the Creation (*d*). And accordingly, Mr. *Jurieu* obſerves from their Writings; that the Trinity commenced but a little before the Creation of the World. And the *Perichoreſis* could not exiſt before the Trinity; for they could not be joined together, before they exiſted.

Now it is certain; that, *before* the generation of the Son, the divine ſubſtance was but *one*:

(*c*) *Ibid.* c. 25. (*d*) *Bulli* op. 232.

and no *Perichoreſis* was wanting, to make the God and Father of the Univerſe *complete* in himſelf. But now we are told, that One divine perſon cannot exiſt; without the other Two. The Son, ſays *Athanaſius*, is as indiviſible from the Father; as the Splendor is from the Light(*e*). And he ſuppoſes the three Hypoſtaſes or Subſtances to make-up one Divinity, as the Fountain and Stream make-up one River; in which ſenſe the whole Trinity is ſaid by him to be one Divinity, one Eſſence, one Nature, and one God (*f*): agreeably to the Doctrine of the *Platoniſts*, where the three Perſons τὰγαθὸν, νοῦς, and ψυχὴ, make-up τὸ Θεῖον. And Dr. *Waterland* argues, that no One perſon is God; excluſive of the other Two.—As if the *Monarchy* of Heaven had been changed by the *Perichoreſis* into an *Ariſtocracy*: and God the Father was no longer Supreme. But how can theſe things be? If one of theſe divine perſons cannot *now* exiſt, *without* the other two; how was it poſſible for the Father to exiſt, *before* the Generation of the Son and the Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt?—If no one of theſe perſons is God, *excluſive* of the other two; how can it be ſaid, that each of them is *of himſelf* both God and Lord (*f*)?—If the whole Trinity be but one Nature or Eſſence;

(*e*) Let. I. Note XIII.—*Whitby* Diſq. mod. 177.

(*ff*) *Athan.* Creed.

how

how can the Son be ſaid to be incarnate, without the Incarnation of the Father and the Holy Ghoſt?

For theſe and many other reaſons I conclude; that the *Homöouſian* doctrine is not to be defended, upon the Principles either of the *Sabellians*, *Polytheiſts*, or *Athanaſians*: and muſt therefore depend ſolely upon the Authority of the *Nicene* Council: and therefore it will be proper to examine that Authority, and prove it to be unſatisfactory; before the doctrine itſelf be totally rejected. But, before I enter upon that ſubject, I ſhall go-on to conſider the Progreſs of theſe Diſputes; till the preſent Times.

CHAPTER IV.

The Progreſs of the Diſputes between the Athanaſians *and* Arians; *and between the* Homöouſians *themſelves, to the preſent Times.*

I Have obſerved, how the *Athanaſians* prevailed over the *Arians* at the Council of *Nice*; by the aſſiſtance of the other *homöouſian* Sects: who all agreed to the uſe of the ſame word; though they underſtood it very differently, when it came to be explained. It was *Conſtantine* himſelf; who, it is ſaid(*a*), inſerted the

(*a*) *Theod.* 1, 8, 9.

word *homoousios* into the *Nicene* Creed; and, under his auſpices, *Arius* was condemned; and his defence was forbidden to be read, and his book *Thalia*, which he had written about it; and *Arius* with his party, *Euzoius*, *Theon*, &c. were degraded and baniſhed, and his Writings were commanded to be burnt, and concealing of them was threatened with Death(*b*).

Thus the firſt Severities broke-out among the Chriſtians againſt one another (*c*): and from this time the Church became engaged in perpetual controverſies, perſecutions, and murthers: and their Councils were carried-on by party rage, vote, and violence. What was heterodox in the days of *Conſtantine*, was orthodox under *Conſtantius*; what was orthodox in the Eaſt, was heterodox in the Weſt; what was looked upon at one Time to be ſo fundamental a Truth, that whoſoever diſbelieved it would without doubt periſh everlaſtingly; at another time was condemned as Hereſy and Blaſphemy. At ſeveral times and places there were not leſs than nine or ten forms of Confeſſion; differing from one another, and from the *Nicene* Creed, and the whole Church. And their diſtinctions were ſo nice and unintelligible; that it was next to impoſſible for any private Man, or even any Council, to give an account of their Faith; without

(*b*) *Soc.* i. 9, &c. (*c*) *Burnet's* pref. to the Lives of the Perſecutors.

the

the imputation of Hereſy. *Arius* was condemned by a Council in the year 322; approved-of, 323; condemned again, 324. *Athanaſius* was condemned at *Tyre*, while *Conſtantine* was alive, in 335; afterwards at *Antioch*, in 341; at *Milan*, 355; at *Arles* and *Conſtantinople*: and approved-of at *Rome*, *Sardis*, and *Alexandria*: and the principles of them both were condemned at *Sirmium*, 357; where there were above three hundred Biſhops of the Weſt; beſides thoſe of the Eaſt(*d*). "The *Arian* Councils were convened by the ſame Authority, which all the world knows did at that time convocate Councils; and by which the eight general Councils did meet; that is, by the Emperor all were called; and as many or more did come to them, than came to the moſt famous Council of *Nice*(*f*)." The Profeſſors of Error, as *Auſtine* ſays, ſurpaſſed the numbers of the Profeſſors of the Truth; as the ſands of the Sea do the ſtars of Heaven(*g*). The Hereſy of *Arius*, ſays the Author of *Nazianzen*'s life, poſſeſſed in a manner the whole extent of the world. *Vincentius Lirinenſis* ſays, the *poiſon* of *Arianiſm* had defiled not only a *ſmall* part but *almoſt all* the whole world: "adeo ut prope cunctis Latini nominis Epiſcopis, partim vi, partim fraude, deceptis,

(*d*) *Ammianus Marcel. Gronov.* Note p. 70. *Baxter* Ch. Hiſt. 58. (*f*) *Taylor*'s Lib. of Proph. p. 108.
(*g*) *Epiſt.* ad *Vincent.*

"deceptis, caligo offunderetur." Biſhops were againſt Biſhops, Councils againſt Councils, and the whole Church with the Pope himſelf became *Arian*, and ſchiſmatical(*b*). And for many ages the heat and rage of the two parties were ſo violent, (till the *Arians* were at length overpowered) that Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy ſeem to have been almoſt appropriated to the differences upon this one Subject, and its immediate Conſequences. All, who defended the Conſubſtantiality, were conſidered as Orthodox; and all who oppoſed it, as Heretics. The very ſame expreſſions were counted orthodox in the *Homöouſians*, which were judged to be heretical in the *Arians*. And many *Sabellian* and *Polytheiſtical* expreſſions, which *Athanaſius* would have condemned; became current in the Church, and were excuſed and ſuffered; becauſe they were mean'd and deſigned againſt the *Arians*. At length theſe oppoſite and contradictory Opinions begat oppoſite and contradictory Creeds; and it was nothing extraordinary to hear ſuch as were eſteemed orthodox, becauſe *homöouſians*; at one time, arguing upon the principles of *Sabellius*; at another time, upon thoſe of *Gregory Nyſſen*, and the *Polytheiſts*. Thus, when they would prove, that it was the Son only that was born of the Virgin *Mary*; it could not be done

(*b*) *Hicks*'s Apol. Vind. p. 22, 37.

by

by the *Nicene* Creed, which taught that the Father and Son were joined together *indivisibly*; as it is understood by *Athanasius*, and other learned men: but by the *Pseudo-athanasian* Creed, which taught that each of the three Persons was of himself God; *i. e.* a separate and distinct Substance: and when they would prove the Unity, it could not be done by the *Pseudo-athanasian* Creed, which supposes each of himself God; but by the *Nicene* Creed, which taught that the three Persons were joined together indivisibly. By these means, though they found the advantage of answering the objections to the *homoousian* Scheme, so as to satisfy the common people; by telling them, that the *Christian Verity* taught one thing, and the *Catholic Religion* the direct contrary; and they must believe them both: yet one would think, they could not easily believe their own arguments, nor satisfy their own minds, except they examined things very superficially: for no man can believe contrary Propositions at the same time. On the other hand, they did great disservice to the cause of Religion, in the eyes of judicious men; by establishing Contradictions, and laying themselves open to all the objections that attend the three different Systems separately: (two of which must be false:) as well as exposing themselves to the manifest absurdities

(y) See chap. viii.

and

and inconſiſtences, which ariſe from comparing them together.

And now for many ages the Patriarchs and Biſhops were ſo much more guided by political than religious motives; that they were ready on all occaſions to change their opinions, and approve or diſapprove of doctrines; as was moſt agreeable to the Emperors (*i*): and, as the matter was carried at laſt in favour of the *homöouſians*; theſe have maintained that doctrine ever ſince with a high hand, and with great art and cunning: not only puniſhing thoſe who preſumed to queſtion it, but diſcouraging as much as poſſible all examination into it, either by Reaſon or Scripture; and repreſenting it as a Myſtery, above our reaſon, and dangerous to be examined into; and the very appealing to the Scripture, inſtead of the Councils, was looked upon as Hereſy and *Arianiſm*. "The *Scripturarians*, ſays *Prateolus*, *Satan* led into Error; "as he did formerly the *Arians*; whilſt they "admitted only the holy Scripture, rejecting "the learned and holy Interpreters, againſt "whom the Catholics oppoſe Tradition(*k*)." But the *Arians* were not any better off, when they received Tradition. For if the ancient Fathers they appealed-to, did not hold the *homöouſian* doctrine, their caſe was not at all

(*i*) See chap. viii. (*k*) *Sandius* Enuc. Hiſt. p. 231.

mended;

mended; they were ſtill Heretics; and the ſcandal fell upon the Fathers themſelves(*l*). For when the *Antenicenes*, to whom both the *Athanaſians* and *Arians* appealed at firſt for the primitive Faith of the Church, were found to be of the ſame opinion as *Arius* in the two great points of Coequality and Conſubſtantiality; inſtead of diſculpating *Arius*, they accuſed the Fathers themſelves to whom they appealed: and thus we find that *Origen* is ſometimes called the fountain of *Arianiſm*; ſometimes *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria*, ſometimes *Lucian* the Martyr. And many others, who had been eſteemed as Orthodox in the ages in which they lived, long before *Arius* was born; are branded by the moderns with the imputation of Hereſy, merely becauſe he believed as they did who lived before him. *Gelaſius* upon this account rejects *Clemens Alex. Tertullian, Julius Afric. Origen, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Euſebius Cæſ.* &c(*m*). And Cardinal *Perron* taxes *Origen, Euſebius, Irenæus, Tertullian*, with the ſame Hereſy; and allows of all the Fathers before the Council of *Nice*, that the *Arians* would gladly be tried by them. In like manner *Petavius* ſhews, that all Antiquity was *Arian*; and tells us, that Biſhop *Alexander*, the great oppoſer of *Arius*, exaggerated matters; when he aſſerts, that the inequality was

(*l*) Let. I. p. 41. (*m*) Let. I. p. 47.

the invention of *Arius*(*n*).—What greater proofs can be expected, that the *Arians* held the *Antenicene* Faith? But however, the *Homöouſian* doctrine was eſtabliſhed at *Nice*; by the means already mentioned: and was underſtood for many ages after, agreeably to the doctrines of the *Athanaſians*.

But at length the *Peripatetic* Philoſophy, or the Philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*, which for many ages had been neglected, began to pleaſe the Students in good Literature; and this Philoſophy being renewed by the *Mahometan Arabians*, and thence ſucked-in by the School-men, utterly aboliſhed the Evangelical Theology(*o*). The *Arabian* Commentators, ſays Dr. *Robinſon*, were deemed the moſt ſkilful and authentic guides in the ſtudy of *Ariſtotle*'s Syſtem; and from them the School-men derived the Genius and Principles of their Philoſophy(*p*).

And now the *homöouſians* began to divide among themſelves, as formerly; ſome arguing upon the old *Athanaſian* Principles of three Subſtances joined together by a *Perichoreſis*, like a three-fold cord; and others upon the Philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*. And this was the diſpute between *Peter Lombard* and Abbot *Joachim*. Upon which the *Ariſtotelian* Trinity, that three

(*n*) *Sandius* Enuc. Hiſt. (*o*) *Owen*'s Theol. l. iv. c. 28. (*p*) Hiſt. of Ch. V. Vol. I. Note 28.—*Prideaux* Connex. ad an. 336.

Hypoſ-

Hypoſtaſes are one God, becauſe they have One and the ſame numerical Eſſence, or *Ouſia*; which is the ſame with the old *Sabellian* doctrine of *Praxeas*, *Paulus Samoſatenus*, *Artemon*, &c. prevailed over the *Athanaſian* doctrine of the *Perichoreſis*; and over all others: and was eſtabliſhed at the fourth general Council of *Lateran*(*q*). And thus Pagan Chriſtianity, which was as Idolatrous in this century, as ever the worſhip was in *Egypt* or *Babylon*; received the farther improvement of a *Mahometan* Commentary; and St. *Athanaſius* gave way to *Ariſtotle*.—But ſtill the *Nicene* and *Athanaſian* Creeds were maintained in the *Romiſh* Church, as if they had been conſiſtent with one another; and were tranſplanted altogether into the Proteſtant Churches: And the *Engliſh* Clergy continue to ſubſcribe to them all; and the writing in defence of them all together is looked-upon as the greateſt ſign of Orthodoxy.

1ſt. That there is only *One* divine Subſtance to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, as eſtabliſhed by the Council of *Lateran*, and received into the Church of *England* in her ſecond and fourth Articles, and the proper Preface to the Communion Service for Trinity Sunday(*r*).

2dly. That there are *three* divine Subſtances *joined together inſeparably*; which is the Senſe of

(*q*) See Let. I. p. 27. Note XX. and Note XXII. (*r*) *Ibid.*

the *Nicene* Council and Creed, as explained by the learned(*s*).

3. That there are three *ſeparate, divine Subſtances*; each of which has all the divine Attributes, and is of himſelf both God and Lord. And this is the doctrine of the *Athanaſian* Creed, as it is called; and it can be no otherwiſe explained. For each of them of himſelf cannot be God, except each be of himſelf a diſtinct and ſeparate Subſtance. And this was the doctrine of *Cyril, Gregory Nyſſen*, &c(*t*).

Here we ſee, that every ſect of the *homöouſians* has had its day: and made uſe of it to eſtabliſh its own particular Senſe of the word: though ever ſo contradictory to what was eſtabliſhed before. For the Chriſtians dreſs-up their Faith, as the *Engliſh* do their Kings for a Coronation: they load them with every new Ornament that comes in vogue; but leave off nothing that was ever in uſe before.

This is the preſent ſtate of the Controverſy. The three oppoſite Syſtems are all held for true; and the denial of any one of them is heretical: and what the penalty of Hereſy is, may be ſeen in the Law-books. So that however the Chriſtians may juſtly boaſt, when they ſpeak of Chriſtianity in general, that it has been propa-

(*s*) See the Account of the *Perichoreſis* above, p. 60, 64. and *Nicep.* Vol. II. 245. 252. (*t*) Let. I. p. 62.—Let. VII. 868.

gated

gated by Reaſon and Argument; the *homöouſian* doctrine has from the beginning been ſupported by Violence and Fraud, as I ſhall more fully prove; and does not ſtand upon the ſame foundation with the other doctrines of Chriſtianity, which have been always held in the Church. St. *Auſtine* makes this diſtinction; when he ſays, "it is reaſonable to believe, that "whatever has been generally received in the "Church, and always held the ſame without "being ordained by a Council, comes to us by "Apoſtolical Tradition(*u*)." And *Vincentius Lirinenſis* ſays, "*quod ad omnibus*, &c. what "has been held by all, every where, and at all "times, is catholic:" but it does not appear by theſe marks, that the *homöouſian* Doctrine is either Apoſtolic or Catholic. And indeed how can it be ſuppoſed to be ſo; when it is confeſſed by *Jerom*, that the Apoſtles themſelves were not ſuch proficients as to underſtand the generation of the Son from the Father's Subſtance (*x*): and it is allowed both by the Papiſts and Proteſtants, that it was not underſtood and ſettled till the 4th Century (*y*): and we are told by *Theodoret*, that the *Nicene Form of Faith* was invented; to demoliſh the Faith of the *Arians*(*z*).

(*u*) *Auguſt.* de *Baptiſ.* con. *Don.* c. 24. (*x*) *Patrick's* Witneſſes of Chriſtianity, p. 10. (*y*) See Let. I. p. 46. 182. 187. 191. (*z*) *Theod.* l. II. c. 18.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

What Authority is to be allowed to the General Councils; and particularly to the Council of Nice, *by which the* Homöousian *Doctrine was at first eſtabliſhed.*

THE Church of *England*, which is by much the moſt reſpectable of all the Proteſtant Churches; declares in the 21ſt Article, that General Councils may err; and that the Church of *Jeruſalen*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and *Rome*, have erred; not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies; but in matters of Faith. And to this Article every Boy, as ſoon as he leaves School, and is admitted as a member in the Univerſity of Oxford, is required to ſubſcribe; ſo that even children are looked upon by the Church of *England*, as of ſufficient Capacity to judge concerning the decrees of Councils; and as having a right to cenſure them, when they find them to be erroneous.

The Church of *Rome* receives or rejects the general Councils as ſhe pleaſes; nay, ſometimes approves one part of a Council, and rejects another; as in thoſe of *Conſtance* and *Frankfort*(*a*). *Pighius*, the antagoniſt of *Luther*, main-

(*a*) *Drelincourt* faux Viſage de l'Antiq.

maintains; that General Councils are not of divine Original, but merely human: and *Gregory* the Ninth aſſerts; that no Council can give Law to the Roman Church(*b*). In ſhort, they neither receive the Fathers, nor Councils (*c*); unleſs they are approved of by the Pope, and agree with the current opinions(*d*).

The ſixth general Council, confirmed by Pope *Adrian*, defined; that Marriage was diſſolved by Hereſy: The Council of *Trent*, confirmed by Pope *Pius*, the Fourth, defined; that it was not. The Council of *Conſtance* decreed, that a General Council was above the Pope: The laſt *Lateran* Council condemned this decree. The Council of *Baſil*, confirmed by Pope *Nicholas*; was reprobated by the laſt *Lateran* Council, confirmed by Pope *Leo* X(*f*).

The little regard the Weſtern Churches pay to General Councils, even when headed by the

(*b*) *Ibid.* p. 251.—De' Decretali di *Greg.* ix.

(*c*) *James*'s Corruption of the Fathers.

(*d*) *Drelincourt*, p. 157.—And ſo Cardinal *Cuſanus* at the Council of *Baſil*; Scripturas non ad eſſe; ſed ad bene eſſe Eccleſiæ facere; Tanto dignius Verbum Dei tradi, quanto ab annis ſcriptura remotius. Explicandam Scripturam eſſe juxta currentem Eccleſiæ ritum: qua ſententiam mutante, Dei etiam judicium mutetur. See *Dan. Geddes* Hiſt. Evang. Renovat. Tom. I. p. 32. who cites *Cuſanus*' 7th. Ep. to the *Bohemians*. *Heidogger* Hiſt. Papat. p. 180. cites the ſame words. A. Deacon *Blackburne*'s Diſcourſes.

(*f*) See Dr. *Stratford*, Diſcourſe on the Neceſſity of Reformation, in the Tracts on Popery; Vol. I. p. 16. &c. 177.

Pope-

Pope, we may ſee in this; that they make no ſcruple to contradict their decrees without the leaſt authority from any other; as appears in no leſs material a point, than the fixing of a public Creed. It was a queſtion in the days of *Cyril* and *Theodoret*, about the year 360; whether the Holy Ghoſt received his Eſſence from the Father only; or from the Father and the Son: The *Nicene* Council had not conſidered it; but in their Creed had ſaid ſimply, "I believe in the Holy Ghoſt;" and there the genuine *Nicene* Creed ends(*g*). The ſecond general Council, viz. that of *Conſtantinople*, thought this Article wanted ſome addition; and added, *the Lord and giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father:* and it was voted in the Council of *Epheſus*, that there ſhould be no addition made to this. [And all theſe Councils are Standards of Orthodoxy in *England.*]—But the queſtion being agitated in the Weſt, whether the Holy Ghoſt did not proceed from the Son; they carried it in the affirmative; and added *filioque* to the *Conſtantinopolitan* Creed; and ſung it publicly in their Liturgy. This was done in the *Spaniſh* and *French* Churches. The matter was referred to *Leo* III.; who concluded againſt the addition to the ancient Creed, which Creed had been authoriſed by a general Council, and

(*g*) So it is given by *Athanaſius*, *Niceph.* Vol. II. p. 101.

received

received by the whole Church: and he had the Creed engraven in Greek and Latin on ſilver plates, without the addition; and ſet-forth in the Church behind the altar of St. *Peter*; not to be altered. But not long after, the following Popes, more in love with their own authority than the peace and unity of the Church, admitted the addition; and *Nicholas* the Firſt was condemned for ſo doing. And yet it continues ſtill in all the weſtern Churches, as the Orientals complain; contrary to a general Council and Pope, which prohibited all additions(*b*). Biſhop *Prideaux* in his Synopſis of the Councils tells us; that in the ſecond Council of *Lions* [the twelfth general Council in 1274] *Michael Palæologos* the Emperor was compelled by neceſſity to make his *Greeks* ſubſcribe *Filioque*; who nevertheleſs recanted as they went home. And thus *Filioque* has been kept in the weſtern Church, *in defiance* of General Councils and Popes, till 1274; and *with the decree* of the ſecond Council of *Lions*, ever ſince. And ſo ſanguine is the weſtern Church upon it; that in the firſt Canon of the Council it declares, *Damnamus & reprobamus*, &c. we damn and reprobate all ſuch, as preſume to deny the Holy Spirit doth eternally proceed from the Father and Son. And on the other hand the eaſtern

(*b*) See *Pearſon* on the Creed; p. 325.

Churches on every Holy Thurſday excommunicate as Schiſmatics and Heretics all the Latins; (ſo they call the Weſtern Churches) who hold *Filioque*. And thus one half of Chriſtendom is damned by the other half; and the compliment is returned.

And here I cannot help remarking; that if the Church, at the time when this diſpute began, believed as it now profeſſes to believe; viz. that the Father and Son are of the ſame *one* Subſtance; nothing could be more abſurdly ridiculous than the whole diſpute. For what could they poſſibly mean by the queſtion, whether the holy Ghoſt proceeded from *one* Subſtance or from *both*; when there was but one Subſtance to diſpute about?

Here we ſee, how little deference the Chriſtian Churches pay to the Authority of General Councils; when it runs contrary to the faſhionable doctrines. And yet even the Proteſtants ſometimes extol this Authority almoſt to an Infallibility; as if ſuch Councils had ſomething in them beyond the common aſſiſtance of the Spirit.

" I make no matter of Faith," ſays Dr. *Hammond*; " becauſe delivered neither by " Scripture, nor Apoſtolic Tradition; yet I " ſhall number it among the *piè credibilia*, that " no General Council, truely ſuch, ever hath " erred, or ſhall err, in matters of Faith."

On

On the contrary Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*, ſpeaking of the ſeventh General Council, ſays: "If "a general Council of Atheiſts had met toge- "ther, with a deſign to abuſe Religion by "talking ridiculouſly about it; they could "not have done it more effectually." But this perhaps might not have been looked-upon by Dr. *Hammond*, as a general Council.—

Here then the firſt queſtion which offers itſelf to the mind will be; where are theſe General Councils, which are *truely ſuch*, to be found; and the anſwer I am afraid, will be very unſatisfactory, viz. that they are purely imaginary; and there was never ſuch a thing in the world as a General Council; and probably never will be: Except we take the definition of it from *Hoſius*(*i*). They were all confined to the *Roman* Empire; and conſequently, under the influence of Emperors and Popes; and were not extended to the whole world, as the Hiſtories and Subſcriptions prove(*k*). And the

(*i*) It was a curious anſwer that was made to *Staniſlaus Orechovius*, a zealous Romaniſt, by Cardinal *Hoſius*; who was appointed Preſident of the Council of *Trent*. He writes to *Hoſius*, that he could not underſtand how the Church could be repreſented, without the Patriarchs of *Conſtantinople* and *Antioch*; or be an œcumenical Council, without them. To which *Hoſius* replies; that the Pope being Oecumenical Patriarch, a Council called by him is an Oecumenical Council. *Hoſ.* op. p. 373. (*k*) *Baxter* Ch. Hiſt. p. 45.

anſwer of the ſixth Council of *Conſtantinople* to *Vigilius* Biſhop of *Rome*, who refuſed to ſit with them, becauſe there were few of the weſtern Biſhops there; confirms it beyond Exception: viz. "that the meeting of the reſt ought not "to be delayed for the weſtern Biſhops; for in "the four General Councils there were never "found a multitude of the weſtern Biſhops; "but only two or three Biſhops and a few "Clerks(*l*)."

But ſuppoſe that there have been General Councils, yet here ariſes another difficulty; that it is by no means agreed between the *Athanaſians* and *Arians*, nor between the Proteſtants and Papiſts, nor between the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches, nor even among the Papiſts themſelves; how many of them there were, nor which were, General; and which were not ſo: and no body can tell, which Councils to truſt to; till theſe queſtions be firſt determined.

There are no fewer than four Councils, which lay claim to the title of the eighth General Council; and the Pope was preſent either in perſon or by his legates, at them all. Three of theſe were held at *Conſtantinople*; the firſt, in 861, in which *Ignatius* the Patriarch of *Conſtantinople* was depoſed; the next in 870; in which he was reſtored, and *Photius* depoſed;

(*l*) *Baxter's* Ch. Hiſt. p. 181.

and

and the third, in 879, when, after the death of *Ignatius*, *Photius* was reſtored(*m*). From hence we may ſee, that even the Councils themſelves which are called General, paid but very little reſpect to one another: and were ſo far from imagining they could not err; that they have made no ſcruple to abrogate the decrees of thoſe that went before them, and eſtabliſh new and contrary ones in their ſtead; juſt as they pleaſed(*n*). And no man will wonder at this, if he conſiders the Hiſtory of thoſe times.—

"It was long before *Conſtantine*, that the "generality of Chriſtians had loſt much of the "primitive Sanctity and Integrity both of doc-"trine and manners. Afterwards, when he "had greatly enriched the Church, they began "to fall in love with honour and civil power: "and then the Chriſtian Religion went to "wreck. Firſt Luxury and Sloth, and then a "great drove of Hereſies and Immoralities "broke looſe among them; and theſe begat "Envy, Hatred, and Diſcord; which abound-"ed every where. At laſt they that were link-"ed together into one Brotherhood by that "holy band of Religion, were as much at va-"riance and ſtrife among themſelves, as the "moſt bitter enemies in the world could be.

(*m*) *Jenkins'* Hiſtoric. examination of the Authority of Councils, pt. II. p. 25. (*n*) *Baxter's* Ch. Hiſt. 202. ſect. 67.

"(See

" (See Let. I. p. 14.) No reverence for, no " conſideration of their duty was left among " them :—the Paſtors and Biſhops and ſome- " times thoſe very Fathers whom we admire " and extol to ſo high a degree; every one of " whom was a leader of their ſeveral flocks; " thoſe very men, I ſay, fought for their Biſhop- " ricks, as Tyrants did for their Sovereignty; " ſometimes throughout the City, ſometimes " in the very Churches, and ſometimes at the " Altar; Clergymen and Laymen fought pro- " miſcouſly; they ſlew one another, and great " Slaughters were made on both ſides."—*Mil-ton* againſt *Salmaſius*, chap. iv.

In the midſt of theſe times, for *Conſtantine* did not call the *Nicene* Council till about the 20th year of his reign; it can hardly be imagin'd that any greater Reformation could be made in the Church by a general Council, than was made at the Council of *Trent:* when Ignorance and Ambition carried all before them.

But I proceed to conſider particularly the Authority of this Council at *Nice*. *Sabinus* Biſhop of *Heraclea* in *Thrace*, in his *Collectio Conciliorum* (which *Valeſius* ſpeaks-of as a very uſeful work, frequently quoted by *Socrates* in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory (*o*);) writes, that the Biſhops who met together at *Nice* and formed

(*o*) *Socr.* i. 8, 9.

the

the Creed, were *imperiti, rudes, inſcii, indocti, omniumque rerum ignari*; without ſkill, or experience, or knowledge, or learning, and ignorant of all things. *Petavius* calls them *rudes & illiteratos*; *Calvin* calls them *Fanaticos*; and *Muſculus* ſays, they were *à Satana inſtigati* (*p*); *Peter Martyr* writes, *ita eos affectibus agitatos, ut ſeſe ceu* ἀλάστορες *aut Furiæ geſſerint*; *bilique et ſtomacho tantum indulſerint*(*q*). *Beza* ſays; ſuch was the folly, ignorance, ambition, and wickedneſs of many Biſhops, even in the *beſt of times*; if compared with thoſe that followed, that you would ſuppoſe the Devil was preſident in their Aſſemblies(*r*).

Archbiſhop *Wake* obſerves; that ſcarce any thing in Antiquity either more expoſed the Chriſtian Religion heretofore, or may more deſerve our ſerious Attention *at this day*; than the violence, the paſſion, the malice, the falſeneſs, the oppreſſion, which reigned in moſt of the Synods held by *Conſtantine* the firſt, and

(*p*) *Sandii* Enuc. Hiſt. lib. II. p. 19. (*q*) On Iſt Kings, xii.

(*r*) Omitto quod ipſa temporum Hiſtoria manifeſte probat; optimis illis temporibus (ſi cum poſterioribus conferantur) eam fuiſſe nonnullorum Epiſcoporum partim Ambitionem, partim futilitatem & Ignorantium, ac multorum etiam apertiſſimam ac deſperatiſſimam Improbitatem; ut Satanam plane cœtibus eorum præſuiſſe, vel ipſi cæci facillime perſpiciant. *Beza* in his dedication of the New Teſt.

after

after him by the following Emperors; upon occaſion of the *Arian* Controverſy(*s*).

Mr. *Andrew Marvel* ſays; it ſeems to have been a pitiful buſineſs; attended with all the circumſtances of other worldly affairs; conducted by a ſpirit of ambition and contention; the firſt, and ſo the greateſt œconomical blow, that by the Chriſtians was ever given to Chriſtianity—a mere imperial or eccleſiaſtical machine; no free agent; but wound-up and let-down by the hand of the workman.—

And this is confirmed by Sir *Iſaac Newton*; who obſerves, that "as ſoon as the Empire "became Chriſtian, the *Roman* Emperors be-"gan to call general Councils out of the Pro-"vinces; and by preſcribing to them what "points they ſhould conſider, and influencing "them by their intereſt and power, they ſet-up "what party they pleaſed(*t*)."

Mr. *John Hales* of *Eton* ſays of Councils in general; It was never heard of in any profeſſion, that concluſion of Truth went by plurality of voices; the Chriſtian profeſſion alone excepted: and I have often muſed, how it came to paſs; that the way, which in all other ſciences is not able to warrant the pooreſt concluſion; ſhould be thought ſufficient to give Authority in Di-

(*s*) Authority of Princes, p. 307. (*t*) On the Proph. p. 195.

vinity,

vinity, the ſupreme Empreſs of Sciences. And of the Council of *Nice* in particular, he ſays; If the Diſcretion of the chief guides and directors of the Church, did, in a point ſo trivial, ſo inconſiderate [as the time of keeping *Eaſter*] ſo manifeſtly fail them; as not to ſee the Truth in a ſubject, wherein it is the greateſt marvel how they could avoid the ſight of it; can we, without the imputation of extreme groſſneſs and folly, think ſuch poor ſpirited Perſons competent judges of the queſtions now in diſpute between the Churches (*u*)?

Binius indeed informs us, that ſeveral of the Fathers aſcribed divine Inſpiration to this Council; calling it the word of God, as *Athanaſius*; others, the divine Oracles of the Holy Ghoſt(*x*). —But perhaps no more was mean'd by this, than by the Engliſh Legiſlature; when we are told, in the Statute that firſt eſtabliſhed the Liturgy in England, that it was concluded by the Biſhops with one uniform agreement, *by the aid of the Holy Ghoſt*(*y*). For, notwithſtanding this, it has undergone four famous alterations ſince that time: which certainly would not have been ſuffered, if the words had been underſtood in a ſtrict ſenſe. And it is juſt the ſame with the Councils: they always bring-in

(*u*) *Hales'* Tracts. (*x*) Note on the Councils, tom. I. p. 261. (*y*) *Chiſhull's* (Archdeacon of *Eſſex*) charge in 1711.

the Holy Ghoſt to abet their deciſions, whether orthodox or heretical; and ſucceeding Councils look upon it as mere matter of Form, and make no ſcruple to reſcind them. Thus the general Council of *Sirmium* in 357 believed ſo little of the Inſpiration of *Nice* in 325; that 300 Biſhops out of the Weſt, beſides the Eaſtern Biſhops, made no ceremony in reſcinding their decrees; and drawing a new Confeſſion of Faith; from which the *Shibboleth Homöouſios* was rejected.

We find that the Emperor *Conſtantine*, notwithſtanding he knew the influence of a more powerful agent upon their determinations; and had a bundle of their Papers, ſtuffed with the accuſations of the Biſhops againſt one another; (which he very prudently burn'd) thought fit to pay them this great and profane compliment; that what 300 Biſhops had agreed upon, ought not to be any otherwiſe eſteemed, than the Sentence of God himſelf; eſpecially ſince the Spirit of God could not fail to ſit upon the minds of ſo famous men; and impart to them the mind and will of God(z).—This is the argument which *Socrates* uſes againſt *Sabinus*; who, as I obſerved, found fault with the *Nicene* Creed; and ſaid it was drawn up by ignorant and unſkilful men. To which *Socrates* anſwers,

(z) See his Letter, Soc. I. ix.

though

though they might be rude and unſkilful; yet being aſſiſted by God, they could not err from the Truth (*a*)!

But this being a *Petitio Principii*, Biſhop *Bull* endeavours to amend this argument; as follows—*quam hypotheſin ſi quis nolit admittere, poterit ad id ipſum Argumentatio* Socrates *ita inſtitui & formari. Patres* Nicæni *ut imperiti & rudes fuiſſe fingantur; pii tamen certe maximam partem fuere: Incredibile autem eſt, tot viros ſanctos & probatos, ex omnibus orbis Chriſtiani regionibus convenientes, (qui qualicunque alias imperitia laboraverint, certe ignorare non poterant elementariam de S. S. Trinitate doctrinam, etiam Catechumenis tradi ſolitam, aut quid ipſi ea de re a majoribus accepiſſent) nefarie conſpirare potuiſſe ad hoc, ut receptam in Eccleſia fidem de primario Chriſtianiſmi articulo innovarent*(*b*).

Though they might be ſuppoſed to be unſkilful and unlearned, yet *being for the moſt part pious*, it is incredible that *ſo many holy men*, brought from *all parts* of the Chriſtian world, who, whatever might be their defects, certainly could not be ignorant *of the doctrine of the Trinity*, which was taught even *to their Catechumens*; or what they had received from their *anceſtors* upon that Subject; ſhould *wickedly*

(*a*) *Socr.* I. ix—*Niceph.* viii. 25. (*b*) *Bulli* op. p. 2.

conſpire to make *innovation* in the *received* doctrine of the Church in the primitive Article of Chriſtianity.

Now all this laboured Paragraph, from the beginning to the end, is mere fallacy and impoſition.

Firſt, the Emperor ſuppoſes; that what 300 Biſhops had agreed upon, ought not to be eſteemed any other than the Spirit of God; and *Socrates* ſays, being aſſiſted by the Spirit of God they could not err from the Truth.—But where do we find, that they were aſſiſted by the Spirit of God? or any promiſe that God will aſſiſt Chriſtian aſſemblies in the diſcuſſion of ſuch metaphyſical qneſtions as they diſputed about; and which the New Teſtament every where avoids? Or if the Spirit of God did aſſiſt ſome of them; how ſhall we know, which party it was that He aſſiſted? or where ſhall we find, that, in ſuch wrangles, the Spirit of God goes with the Majority of votes? But the difficulty is as great, if the Spirit of God *did* aſſiſt them; as if it did *not*. For what ſhall we then ſay to the Council of *Ariminum*, which conſiſted of a greater number of Biſhops a few years after; who rejected the word *homöouſios*, denied the Father and Son to be conſubſtantial, and condemned the *Nicene* Council,

Council, and the word *Ouſia*, becauſe not uſed in Scripture (*c*)?

Au'ſtin, in his diſpute with *Maximus*, the *Arian* Biſhop; was ſenſible, that, upon this account, the authority of the Council of *Nice* was of no ſignification. He knew, that the Council of *Ariminum*, which was againſt him; was in other things equal to that of *Nice*; and in number ſuperior. If the Council of *Nice* was authoriſed by the Emperor *Conſtantine*, ſo was this by *Conſtans*: If there were 300 Biſhops at *Nice*; *Bellarmine* and *Melchior Canus*, Biſhop of the *Canaries*, reckon 600 at *Ariminum* (*d*); others ſay, 1000; and therefore *Bellarmine* calls it a General Council; upon which account *Au'ſtin* declares to *Maximus*, that he will not avail himſelf of the *Nicene* Council; but the queſtion ſhould be determined by Scripture and Reaſon. *Nec ego* Nicænum, *nec Tu debes* Ariminenſe, *tanquam præjudicaturus, proferre Concilium*; *nec ego hujus, nec tu illius Auctoritate detineris.* Scripturarum Auctoritatibus, non quorumcunque propriis, ſed utriſque cummunibus Teſtibus, cauſa cum cauſa, res cum re, ratio cum ratione certet(*e*).

2dly. It is incredible, ſays the Biſhop; that ſo many holy men ſhould *wickedly conſpire*, &c.

(*c*) *Sandii* Enuc. Hiſt. lib. II. p. 121.—Soc. lib. III. ch. 32. (*d*) *Drelincourt* Faux Viſ. de l'Antiq. p. 215. (*e*) *Heiron.* lib. III. c. 14.

but

but *Sabinus* did not accuſe them of *wickedly conſpiring*; but of being ignorant and unlearned.

3dly. The Biſhop argues, that it is incredible they ſhould conſpire to *make an Innovation* in the received Doctrines. But this is the very queſtion in diſpute; whether the Innovation was made by the *Arians*, or *Athanaſians*. It is certain, that the *Arians* were willing to be tried either by the Scripture or Antiquity: but with this the *Athanaſians* were not content.

In the 5th Council of *Antioch*, which was called by *Conſtantius* in obedience to his Father's orders, to inquire into the Faith after the affair of *Arius* was over; the Biſhops of the Council declared to the Biſhops of every City, that they believed agreeably to the Faith delivered down from the beginning, preſcribed; and that they were not followers of *Arius*, but rather had admitted him, upon a thorough examination of his Faith.—And theſe preſented a Form of faith, in which the word *homöouſios* was not mentioned; nor was it ſaid, that the Father and Son were Coeternal—and after ſome ſtay at *Antioch*, they found and publiſhed alſo the Form, which was compoſed by *Lucian* the Martyr; from which the ſame word was rejected; and it was ſaid, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt were *three Hypoſtaſes*; but in *Conſent* one. And *Athanaſius* ſays; a third Form, produced by *Theophronius*, was approved-

of

of in the Council; in which nothing was mentioned concerning *Ouſia*, or Subſtance(*f*).—It does not therefore appear, that the *rejecting* the word *homöouſios*, was an Innovation of the *Arians*; but more probably that the *introducing* it, was an Innovation of the *Athanaſians*, for we are well aſſured, that it was neither in the Scripture, nor in the moſt ancient Creeds; and that it was condemned at the Council of *Antioch*, long before the Council of *Nice*.

4thly. The Biſhop ſays; ſo many *holy men*, brought from *all parts*, could not be ignorant of the *Doctrine of the holy Trinity*; which was *taught* to the *Catechumens*, and which they *received from their Anceſtors*.—As to their *holineſs*; it does not appear, that the *Athanaſians* were more holy than the *Arians*, or the Council of *Nice* more holy than that of *Ariminum*: nor that *Euſebius* and his friends were more holy, when they ſubſcribed to the *Nicene* Faith for fear of the Emperor; than when they reſigned their Biſhopricks, and went into baniſhment, upon repenting of that Subſcription. There were certainly holy and unholy men on both ſides; and in perſecuting one another, they were all unholy. But whatever were their moral Characters, they were all ſubject to miſtakes: and from *whatever part of the world* they were brought, they were all under the dominion of the Emperor; and under his influence. And to ſay they could not be

(*f*) *Sand.* Eccleſ. Hiſt. Enuc. lib. II. p. 67.

ignorant

ignorant of the doctrine of the Trinity, is nothing to the purpoſe. The *Arians* believed the *Trinity*, as well as the *Athanaſians* (*g*); and ſo did Dr. *South*, and Dr. *Sherlock*, and Dr. *Clarke*, and Dr. *Waterland*; and yet they found matter enough to diſpute about, in explaining their ſeveral Opinions.—As to the notion; that the *Athanaſian* Doctrine was *taught to their Catechumens*, and received *from their Anceſtors*; there is not the leaſt probability of it. *Socrates* calls it a logical Controverſy; and tells us, it pervaded all *Egypt*, *Libya*, *Thebais*, and all the Oriental Provinces; and increaſed to that degree, that in every City the Biſhops were divided againſt the Biſhops; and the People againſt the People: that it was a doubtful queſtion, never before diſcuſſed; that many of the Biſhops and Clergy ſided with *Arius*, and many pious, venerable and ingenious men; and the Synods of *Bithynia* and *Paleſtine* communicated with him, and wrote to all the Biſhops to do the ſame(*h*). Even Biſhop *Alexander*, the great oppoſer of *Arius*, was a long time wavering between the two opinions; before he fixed(*i*). And it plainly appears from the letter of *Conſtantine* to *Athanaſius* and *Arius*; that it was not then looked-upon as an Article of Faith; but a queſtion of fruitleſs curioſity(*k*). If theſe things are true, how

(*g*) See his Creed, in the Append. No. 3.

(*h*) *Socr.* lib. I. c. 15. p. 426, 427, 428. (*i*) *Nic.* VIII. c. 5. (*k*) See above ch. II.—*Socr.* lib. I. c. VII.

is

is it poſſible, that it ſhould be a doctrine, which was taught to the Catechumens; and received from their Anceſtors?

Socrates ſays, in anſwer to *Sabinus*; that there were many wiſe and learned men at the *Nicene* Council: and there is no doubt of it: and yet the Creed might be formed by Men of a very different character, as to this particular article; who might make the majority againſt them, and outvote them; as they ſeem to have done in ſome queſtions of the utmoſt importance, two of which are ready at hand. 1ſt. We know, that it was deſigned by this Council; that no words ſhould be uſed, in ſettling this article of Faith; but what were in Scripture(*l*). And this was approved of, as I obſerved, by men of the beſt ſenſe; ſuch as *Euſebius*, *Baſil*, *Athanaſius*, &c(*m*). And yet the Council rejected the Creed, which *Euſebius* had drawn in that manner; and preferred another with the unſcriptural word *homöouſios* in it, which is purely metaphyſical. Another inſtance we find upon the important ſubject of Perſecution. *Athanaſius* ſpeaks very ſtrongly againſt the uſe of Violence in matters of Religion as the work of the Devil; and condemns the *Arians*, in baniſhing thoſe who would not ſubſcribe to their

(*l*) See *Cudworth*, 608. (*m*) See ch. I.

decrees; as friends to the Devil: and yet this very Council baniſhed *Arius*, *Euzoius*, &c. for Non-ſubſcription. How could theſe things be; except the opinions of the wiſe and learned had been over-ruled by the Ignorant; or, what is much the ſame thing in the preſent argument; unleſs the minds of the wiſe and learned were too much inflamed by their Intereſts and Paſſions, to liſten to the voice of Reaſon.—

So that notwithſtanding there might be many wiſe men preſent at the *Nicene* Council, which *Sabinus* does not deny; but particularly mentions *Euſebius Pamphili*, as one who deſerved to be credited (*n*); the words of *Sabinus* may ſtill be true, that the Creed was compoſed by unſkilful and unlearned men, for any thing that appears to the contrary from what has been ſaid by the Emperor *Conſtantine*, *Socrates*, or Biſhop *Bull*.

But I muſt not leave this ſubject without taking notice of a Miracle, which is ſaid to have been wrought in favour of the Council; for, if the power of God appears in confirmation of it, all arguments againſt it muſt give-way. The account is thus given us by *Nicephorus*. "During the time that the acts of the *Nicene* "Council were finiſhing, it happened that two "of the Biſhops died; who had not yet ſub-

(*n*) *Socr.* lib. I. ch. vii.

"ſcribed.

"ſcribed. The reſt of the Fathers coming to "the common burial-place, and ſtanding round "the Tomb holding the libel (*o*) in their "hands; ſaid to them, as if they had been "alive and heard them: Divine Fathers, ye "have fought a good fight with us; ye have "finiſhed your courſe; ye have kept the Faith: "And now if you think what we have done, "ought to ſucceed; becauſe ye now ſee more "clearly; being enlightened by the immediate "Glory of the Trinity; it is proper you ſhould "ſign the libel together with us. So ſaying "they laid the libel ſealed upon the grave; and "paſſed the night without ſleep: and the next "day coming to the grave, the ſeal being un-"broken, they unfolded the libel, and found "*their* Subſcriptions added to the reſt, as yet "freſh, and in theſe words. We Chryſanthus "and Muſenius, who agreed with all the Fa-"thers in the firſt holy and Oecumenical "Council of *Nice*, though tranſlated in body, "with our own hands have ſubſcribed the "libel(*p*)."

What may be thought to confirm this ſtory is another account of the interpoſition of Providence upon a like occaſion; and this ſtory is favoured by no leſs a man than Biſhop *Bull*. We are told by *Gregory Nyſſen*, in his life of

(*o*) In which the decrees of the Council were contain'd.
(*p*) *Niceph.* viii. 23.

Gregory Thaumaturgus; that the Virgin *Mary*, accompanied by St. *John*, appeared to *Gregory* in a viſion; and explained to him the whole myſtery of Godlineſs in a ſhort Creed, which he took down in writing as they dictated it to him; and left a Copy of it as a legacy to the Church of *Neocæſarea*, of which he was Biſhop.

But Dr. *Whitby* has collected together ſuch reaſons, as ſeem to invalidate the Credibility of this account; having ſhewn that the Creed is contradictory to the principles of *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, in his later writings; that it was unknown to *Baſil*, the brother of *Gregory Nyſſen*; that in all diſputes with the *Arians* till the age of *Juſtinian*, no mention is made of it, nor any appeal to it, nor afterwards upon the diſputes concerning the Holy Ghoſt(*q*), &c.

And beſides, when we are told, that *Spiridon*, Biſhop of *Cyprus*, prayed his daughter out of her grave upon ſo trifling an occaſion as the diſcovery of an ornament, which had been committed to her care a little before ſhe died(*r*), and ſuch like; it renders all the miracles ſuſpected, that are ſaid to be ſo common in theſe ages among Jews, Chriſtians, and Pagans.—

(*q*) *Whitby*'s preface to his Quæſ. mod. (*r*) *Socrat.* Eccleſ. Hiſt.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

Of the first four General Councils, and the Authority of their Canons; and the Origin of the present Test of Heresy, which joins the four first general Councils with the four Evangelists.

IT is now time to consider the four first General Councils singly.—The Council of *Nice* consisted of two or three hundred Bishops; but was so far from being a General Council, that there were but five western Bishops present at it, two from *Italy*, one from *France*, one from *Spain*, and one from *Africa*(*s*). It was held about the year of Christ 325; and Dr. *Prideaux*, Regius Professor of Divinity at *Oxford*, and Bishop of *Worcester*, says of it, "The "Canons of *Nice*, being 20, *nor is it sufficiently* "*manifest how warrantable*, came into the hands "of Posterity. And Bishop *Taylor* says, this "Council hath been very much abused; and "its Authority and great Reputation made it "more liable to the fraud and pretences of "idle people. For whereas the *Nicene* Fathers "made but 20 Canons; for so many and no "more were received by *Cecilian*, Bishop of

(*s*) *Bellarm.* lib. I. de Concil. c. 17. antepen.

"*Carthage*

" *Carthage* (who was at *Nice* in the Council),
" by St. *Auſtine* and 200 *African* Biſhops with
" him; by St. *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, by *Atticus* of
" *Conſtantinople*, by *Ruffinus*, *Iſidore*, and *Theo-*
" *doret*, as *Bononius* witneſſeth; yet there are
" 80 lately found out in an *Arabian* MS.
" and publiſhed in Latin by *Turrianus* and *Al-*
" *phonſus* of *Piſa*, Jeſuits ſurely, and likely to
" be maſters of the mint, [which Dr. *Comber*
" ſays, neither *Baronius* nor the Annotator dare
" to defend] and not only the Canons, but the
" very Acts of the *Nicene* Council are falſe and
" ſpurious; and are ſo confeſſed to be by *Baro-*
" *nius*—for the *Nicene* Council was foully tam-
" pered with(*a*); and indeed it does not appear,
" that the Acts of the Council were ever com-
" mitted to Writing, ſo that moſt probably
" theſe muſt be all forged(*b*)."

Two of the Canons of this Council, conſidering that it is one of the Teſts of Hereſy in *England*, are very remarkable. The 3d forbids the Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons to ſleep with their wives(*c*). And this agrees with what is ſaid by *Jerom* againſt *Vigilantius*; that if a Biſhop gets children after he becomes a Biſhop, he ſhall not be looked upon as a Huſband, but

(*a*) *Taylor*'s Lib. of Proph. fol. 474. 4to. 118.

(*b*) *Valeſius*'s Note on *Euſebius*'s Life of *Conſtantine*, B. iii. ch. 14.—*Dupin*, Vol. I. p. 318. Note l.

(*c*) *Niceph.* lib. viii. 19.

as

as an Adulterer (*d*); "non quaſi Vir tenebitur, "ſed quaſi Adulter damnabitur." We are told indeed by the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians; that this Canon was prevented from being eſtabliſhed by *Paphnutius*; who opined, that thoſe who were already married ſhould not be ſeparated from their wives; though thoſe who were not married when they entered into the miniſtry, ſhould not be allowed to marry afterwards(*e*). But *Dupin* ſays, this ſtory of *Paphnutius* is of doubtful authority. And ſo indeed it muſt be, or how could *Ambroſe* in his Epiſtle to *Vercellius* quote this Canon of the *Nicene* Council againſt the marriage of Prieſts; if there were no ſuch Canon?—Beſides this, the *Nicene* Canons forbid the Tranſlation of Biſhops, Prieſts, &c. and order thoſe who have been tranſlated to return back to their firſt Church. They forbid Kneeling at Prayers on Sunday and on the day of Pentecoſt; and order the Rebaptiſing of Heretics; all which things are contrary to the Faith and Practice of the Church of *England*; of whoſe Orthodoxy this Council is a Teſt.

What a ſad effect this Humour of Creed-making immediately had upon the Church; and

(*d*) *Hierom.* Queſ. 117. Vet. & Nov. Teſt.—See *Sandii* Hiſt. Eccl. lib. ii. p. 26.—*Dupin*, p. 318.—*Niceph.* lib. vi. c. 36. Note. (*e*) *Niceph.* viii. 20.

what

what confuſion and animoſity it introduced; we find by the words of *Hilary*.

"Since the *Nicene* Council we do nothing "but write Creeds; and while we quarrel about "words, while we raiſe queſtions about Novel- "ties, while we fight about ambiguities, and "about Authors, and ſtrive about parties; "while there is difficulty in conſent, and while "we anathematiſe one another, ſcarce any one "is *Chriſt's*. What a change there was in the "laſt year's Creed! the 1ſt decrees, that *Homo- "öuſios* ſhould not be mentioned; the next de- "crees and publiſhes it; the third does by in- "dulgence excuſe the word *Ouſia*, as uſed "before by the Fathers uncompounded; the "fourth does not excuſe, but condemn it; it "is come at length to paſs; that nothing [pro- "feſſed] among us or thoſe before us, remains "ſacred or inviolable. We decree annual and "monthly Creeds concerning God: we repent "of our decrees: we defend thoſe that repent "of them: we anathematiſe thoſe that we de- "fended: we defend other men's opinions in "our own, or condemn our own in thoſe of "other men; and, while we bite one another, "we are conſumed one of another." And how naturally and unavoidably muſt all this follow; from leaving the Scripture, and truſting to the Traditions and Commandments and Doctrines of Men!

The

The Second General Council was that of *Conſtantinople*, *Theodoſius* being Emperor; this was held in 381, 382, 383, and is called a General Council; though there was but one Weſtern Biſhop preſent at it. It confirmed the Decrees of *Nice*. Its Canons are reckoned by *Caranza* to be only Seven, by *Langus* Nine, all which except the firſt are rejected by the Roman Church; and the four laſt of the Seven do not appear in the Code of *Dionyſius*(*f*). *Baronius* ſays, the 5th Canon was not received by the Church of *Rome*; and he ſuſpects it to be forged(*g*). *Bellarmine* ſays, it was not conſented-to by the Pope, and therefore void; ſo ſay *Pighius* and *Coriolanus*(*h*), agreeable to an eccleſiaſtical Canon made before the year 340, according to *Nicephorus*, that the Churches ought not to decide any thing in their Synods without the opinion of the Biſhop of *Rome*(*i*); and *Julius* Biſhop of *Rome*, in his Epiſtle to the *Antiochians*, obſerves the ſame; and that all ſuch deciſions are therefore null(*k*).

(*f*) *Dupin* ſays, The Canons were not approved of for a long time by the Biſhops of the Weſt: Not only St. *Leo* rejects them in his 53d Epiſt. which is now the 80th, but *Gelaſius* in his Epiſtle to *Dardanus*, and St. *Gregory* in his 25th Epiſt. of the 6th Book. It is not eaſy to ſay how many Canons there were in the three Councils of *Conſtantinople*, which we now ſpeak of; or in which of the three they were made, or whether all in the ſame. *Dupin*, Vol. I. p. 346. (*g*) *Baron.* ad ann. 387. (*h*) *Jenkins*, p. 12. (*i*) *Nicep.* lib. ix. c. 5. (*k*) *Ibid.* c. x.

For information what kind of Biſhops they were, who compoſed this Council, take the following account from *Gregory Nazianzen*; who complains to *Procopius*, that He had never ſeen a good end to any Council; nor any that did not rather add to the Evils, than reform them: and a Man, ſays he, that will judge of them there, will ſooner contract diſhoneſty himſelf; than repreſs the diſhoneſty of others (*l*): upon which account he reſolved never to meet them. The Courtiers, he ſays, whether they were true to the Emperor, he knows not; but for the moſt part were perfidious to God—and the Biſhops raging like furious horſes in battle, and like madmen caſting duſt into the air; and under their ſeveral banners fulfilling their own contentions, and becoming the determiners of wicked ambition and magnificence; and unrighteous and abſurd judges in matters(*m*), &c. The like he has in his Poem *de ſua Vita*; οἱ δὲ πρόεδροι(*n*), &c. and more to the ſame purpoſe in his laſt Oration *de Epiſcopis*, Vol. II. and in his 59 Epiſtle to *Sophronius*(*o*).

There are two Copies of the Council of *Epheſus*, which is the 3d General Council; held in the year 434. The firſt Copy obſerves eight, the ſecond thirteen Canons. Biſhop *Prideaux* ſays, they were carped at by *Theodoret*; but

(*l*) Ad *Procop.* 814. (*m*) p. 528. Orat. 32. (*n*) *Ibid.* p. 24. (*o*) *Baxter's* Church Hiſt.

freed

freed from objections by *Cyril*(*p*), who presided at that Council. But Dr. *James* remarks, that though all the Editions of the Councils bear the name of *Cyril*, as presiding at this Council as Pope *Celestine*'s deputy; yet it is against the Authority of *Dionysius Exiguus*, and the Greek MSS. He mentions other forgeries in this Council; and has discarded all its Canons. And it is at least 750 years and upwards, as *Daillé* observes, *Anastatius Bibliothecarius*, the Pope's Library-keeper, testified; that these Canons were not any where to be found in the most ancient Latin Copies; withall accusing the Greeks of having forged them(*q*). And *Gregory* the Great witnesseth, that the Church of *Rome* did not receive the Canons of this Council; nor those of the 22d Council of *Constantinople*(*r*).

It may be worth while to consider briefly in this place what the chief Subjects were, upon which the four first general Councils were so much concerned; and upon which they made

(*p*) This is the same *Cyril*, who called the Virgin *Mary* the Mother of God; and the Complement or Supplement of the holy Trinity. See *Herbelot*'s Bib. Orient. p. 584. col. 2. and Let. I. p. 28. (*q*) *Jenkins*'s Examination of the Authority of Councils. See Popish Tracts, No. 207 in *Peck*'s Collection.—*Daillé* Eng. 47, 48. (*r*) *Brent's Father Paul*'s Council of *Trent*, p. 320. This seems to be the opinion of *Niceph.* lib. xiii. c. 34.

no ſcruple to anathematiſe and perſecute all that differed from them.

The grand Error, from whence ſo many different Hereſies (as they are called) aroſe, was the doctrine of Conſubſtantiality; which was decreed at *Nice*, and confirmed at the Council of *Conſtantinople*. And the Councils of *Epheſus* and *Chalcedon* were thoroughly employed in accounting for the Conſequences of this doctrine, (viz. the Suffering of an impaſſible Being) and condemning the different methods as Hereſies and Blaſphemies, by which many wiſe and pious men endeavoured to explain it.

After the Council of *Nice*, the Church in general believed that Chriſt conſiſted of a human Soul, and of the *Logos*, which *Logos* they ſuppoſed to be impaſſible; and that theſe two were ſomehow united: by which means they argued, that the Sufferings of the Soul might *be called* the Sufferings of the *Logos*—but how it could really be ſo, was what they differed about.

Cyril argued, as I obſerved in the 2d Chapter; that a Soul and body belonged to the *Logos:* and therefore the Sufferings of theſe, was the Suffering of the *Logos*; and this is reckoned orthodox.

Eutyches and *Dioſcorus* did not ſee how this could properly be the Suffering of the *Logos*; (though they allowed it to be the Suffering of what

what was joined to the *Logos*:) and therefore they invented a notion, that the fleſh or human nature was changed in an *unchangeable* manner(*s*) into the Divinity (*t*); and by this the two Natures were united (viz. the divine and human) into one. And the condemning this as Hereſy and the depoſing theſe two Biſhops as Heretics, was the great Buſineſs of the 4th general Council of *Chalcedon*.

On the other hand *Neſtorius* believed, that the Union was made by God's dwelling in Man as in a Temple (*u*); and that he was united to the human Nature, not in Subſtance; but in Habit and Affection, as a Friend to a Friend(*x*). And he believed, the two natures divine and human by this union became one; and ſo the *Logos* ſuffered, when the human Nature ſuffered. But this again was a damnable Hereſy, and anathematiſed(*y*). For the Orthodox did not allow to ſay, they became one nature; but only they became one Perſon. And this was the grand point to be ſettled at the 3d general Council, that of *Epheſus*; to which *Cyril* came, as we are told by *Nicephorus*, with a hoſtile mind againſt *Neſtorius*(*z*). *Hoſtili enim jamjudum erga* Neſtorium *erat animo* Cyrillus: And

(*s*) *Niceph.* p. 876. (*t*) *Prateolus*, 145, 177. (*u*) *Ib.* 348. (*x*) *Niceph.* 875. (*y*) *Ibid.* 596. (*z*) *Ibid.* 513.

ſo

ſo *Neſtorius* was deprived and ruined—And thus all theſe different ſects, as they came into power, thought they had a right to deprive, baniſh, murder, and anathematiſe one another, juſt as they pleaſed; and the Vote of a Council was a kind of Death-warrant.

It may not be amiſs to take notice how this Council of *Epheſus* was began and carried on. It began contrary to the remonſtrance of the Emperor's officer *Candidianus*; who ordered them to ſtay for the arrival of the Oriental Biſhops, ſaying that it was the intention of the Emperor to make it a general Council; and not a particular ſeparate Aſſembly(*a*). But as they would pay no regard to him, he made his Proteſt, and left the Council; and ſent an account to the Emperor, that things were carried-on with ſuch violence, that he had pronounced all to be null, and charged them to-begin a new. To him ſucceeded *Joannes Comes*; who ſent the Emperor word, that all was in confuſion; and gave him an amazing account of their ſtrange fierceneſs; and he was forced at laſt, in order to prevent ſedition, to commit *Neſtorius* and *Cyril*, the ringleaders, into cuſtody: and at the ſecond Council of *Epheſus*, which is called a Council of Thieves(*b*), held only fifteen years after, the Acts of the former Council were read; and all were excommunicated, who did not ap-

(*a*) *Dupin*, 294. (*b*) *Euagr.* B. I. c. ix.

prove

prove of them: and the Biſhops of that Council (viz. the ſecond of *Epheſus*) declared afterwards at the Council of *Chalcedon*, that they acted againſt their wills; being under Fear: Condemnation and Baniſhment being threatened; and Soldiers there with Clubs and Swords. The Biſhop of *Epheſus* himſelf declared, that *Elpidius* and *Eulogius* and many Soldiers threatned him; and *he was not ſuffered to go out, till he had ſubſcribed.* And *Flavianus*, who offered his appeal, was ſo beaten and abuſed, that he died of his hurt(*b*). Thus we ſee how this third General Council made its way. This is the ſame Council in which *Neſtorius* was condemned for declaring the Virgin *Mary* to be the Mother of Chriſt, and not *the mother of God:* and ſaying, I cannot term him God; who was two or three months old(*c*). And accordingly, this Council was anathematiſed by all the *Neſtorians*, who make the chief part of the Eaſtern Churches inhabiting *Babylon*, *Aſſyria*, *Meſopotamia*, *Parthia*, *Media*, &c.; ſpreading north to *Cataja*, and ſouth to *India*.—This is the ſame Council, which decreed Anathema to all thoſe who voted any addition to the *Conſtantinopolitan* Creed, which declared that the Holy Ghoſt proceeded from the Father; and there ended. However, the Church of *England* has not only

(*b*) *Baxter's* Ch. Hiſt. p. 99.—*Euagr.* B. VII. ch. 33.
(*c*) *Nicep.* lib. xv.

received

received the addition which was afterwards made; that he proceeded alſo from the Son: but continues the ſame Council to be one of the Teſts of Hereſy, which forbids *that*, or any *other* addition.

The Actions or Seſſions of the fourth General Council of *Chalcedon* in the year 455, according to *Caranza*, are ſixteen; to which are added twenty-nine Canons. We plainly ſee by the Emperor *Leo*'s circular letter given us by *Euagrius*; that he did not know what to think of this Council himſelf: and *Amphilochius* Biſhop of *Side* declared againſt it(*d*). The *Romans* do by no means allow of its Canons; becauſe they were ratified by the Greeks, after the departure of the Ambaſſadors of *Leo:* neither will they bear with the Twenty-eighth, becauſe it concerns equality of Privileges. This Council was carried on with ſuch violence(*e*), and was ſo often received and rejected; as plainly proves its preſent Orthodoxy to depend merely upon the chance of the Die. It was this Council that firſt offered the Biſhop of *Rome* the title of Univerſal Biſhop: as we are informed in a letter from Pope *Gregory* the firſt to the Emperor *Mauritius*, And the chief Doctrine in it was, anathema to *Neſtorius*; and to him who ſays not that *Mary* was the mother of God. Upon which account it is rejected, together with the

(*d*) *Euagr.* B. II. ch. ix. x. (*e*) *Nicep.* lib. xv. c. 30.

Council

Council of *Epheſus*, by all the *Neſtorians*: and ſo it was by Pope *Leo*; who in his 53d Epiſtle to *Anatolius* and his 54th to *Novatian*, and his 53d to *Pulcheria*, accuſes it of Ambition and inconſiderate Temerity: And therefore no fit aſſembly for the habitation of the holy Ghoſt(*f*). *Gelaſius* and *Bellarmine* declare its decrees to be partly defenſible, and partly not. And St. *Gregory* aſſerts, that the *Conſtantinopolitans* have corrupted this Council; and ſuſpects the ſame concerning the Council of *Epheſus*.—" And " though this Council of *Chalcedon* hath, *ex poſt* " *facto*, and by voluntary conſent of after ages, " obtained great reputation; yet they who lived " *immediately*, after it; who obſerved all the *Cir-* " *cumſtances* of the thing and the *diſabilities* of the " *Perſons*, and the *uncertainty* of the *truth* of its " decrees, by reaſon of the *inconcludingneſs* of the " Arguments brought to atteſt it; were of ano- " ther mind."

I ſhall enter into a ſhort account of theſe diſputes; and in my way ſhall take notice, how the preſent Teſt of Hereſy in theſe Kingdoms firſt aroſe; which joins the Firſt four General Councils with the four Evangeliſts.

After the Council of *Chalcedon*, two Ladies of the higheſt rank and quality in the *Roman* Empire were of different opinions about its orthodoxy. *Eudocia*, the widow of the late Emperor *Theodoſius*, oppoſed it; *Pulcheria*, the

(*f*) Biſhop *Taylor*'s Lib. of Proph. fol. 470.

ſiſter of *Theodoſius*, and wife of *Marcian*, favoured it. At length the Empreſs procured the Converſion of her ſiſter-in-law; and all went on in favour of the Council, during the reigns of *Martian* and *Leo*.—But when *Baſiliſcus* uſurped the Empire from *Zeno*, and publiſhed circular letters againſt the Council(*g*), requiring the Biſhops to renounce it; three Patriarchs, and 500 Biſhops ſubſcribed to his renunciation: and the Biſhops of *Aſia* convened at *Epheſus*, preſented a Supplication to *Baſiliſcus*; declaring, "that they had ſet their hands to it with all *joy* "and *alacrity*; and begging him to publiſh "nothing contrary to thoſe divine Circular "Letters; knowing for certain, ſay they, that "the whole world will be overturned again, "and the miſchiefs done by the Synod of *Chal-* "*cedon* will be found ſmall and trivial, which "yet have effected innumerable murders, and "have unjuſtly, and illegally poured forth the "blood of the Orthodox(*h*)."

But *Acacius* Biſhop of *Conſtantinople* incited the Monks and populace of *Conſtantinople* againſt *Baſiliſcus*, as a Heretic; upon which being affrighted, he changed his opinion, and commanded the Council to be receiv'd: and with this command the Biſhops of *Aſia* immediately complied, and ſent a penitentiary Letter to *Acacius*;

(*g*) See the Letters in *Evagr.* B. III. ch. 4, 5. and *Niceph.* lib. XVI. 3. (*h*) *Niceph.* lib. XVI. c. 4.

wherein

wherein they declared, "that they had ſubſcribed to the circular letters of *Baſiliſcus* by *force* and *conſtraint*, not voluntarily; and they ſwore to it; and that they had not believed, nor did believe otherwiſe than agreeable to the Council of *Chalcedon* (*i*);" and ſo the Council of *Chalcedon* became orthodox once more. But upon the reſtoration of *Zeno* the diſpute began again; and there were great diſturbances at *Alexandria* and in other places about it; and many diſputes were held before *Zeno*, but nothing was brought to effect, becauſe *Zeno* himſelf did not wholly aſſent to the Council. The Biſhops of *Alexandria* and *Antioch* curſed the Council; and the Biſhops of *Rome* and *Conſtantinople* curſed them for ſo doing(*k*). And *Timothy* Biſhop of *Conſtantinople* firſt curſed thoſe who *did not* receive the Council; but being rebuked by the Emperor and his Archdeacon, he curſed every one that *did* receive it(*l*).

Upon the death of *Zeno*, *Anaſtaſius* became Emperor; who left all parties to think of the Council as they pleaſed: upon which they divided into three parties; ſome were for every word of the Council, and ſome for curſing it, and ſome *for Peace, and Liberty of Conſcience*. The *Eaſt* one way, the *Weſt* another, and *Lybia*

(*i*) *Euagr.* ch IX.—*Niceph.* lib. XVI. c. 9.
(*k*) *Euagr.* B. III. ch. 22. (*l*) *Nic.* XVI. 34.

another. Such great Confuſion and Blindneſs, as *Nicephorus* obſerves, befel the whole world(*m*).

About this time *Xenaias*, Biſhop of *Hierapolis*, brought a troop of Monks from *Cynegica* to *Antioch*, to oblige *Flavianus* the Biſhop of *Antioch*, to curſe the Council, and the Epiſtle of *Leo*. *Flavianus* refuſed; and the people defended him, and ſuch a number of monks were ſlain; that they threw the dead bodies into the river, to ſave the trouble of burial(*n*). And another troop of monks from *Cæloſyria*, hearing of the Biſhop's danger, flocked to *Antioch*; and made another ſlaughter, as great as the former. However, *Xenaias* at laſt prevailed; and obliged the Biſhop to curſe the Council(*n*). Upon theſe diſorders *Flavianus* was ejected, and *Severus* was choſen Biſhop of *Antioch*; and the firſt day he got-in, he curſed the Council; though it is ſaid he had promiſed the Emperor not to do it.

And now comes-in the Teſt of Hereſy, which the Church of *England* ſtill enjoys. The monks of *Jeruſalem* were engaged for the Council in the following manner: one *Theodoſius*, a monk or abbot, cried out in the pulpit, before a great aſſembly; "If any man equal not the four "Councils with the four Evangeliſts, let him

(*m*) *Nic.* ch. 25.—*Euagr.* B. III. ch. 30.
(*n*) *Ib.* XVI. c. 27.

"be

"be anathema." This voice reſolved the monks for the Council; and they took it as a law, that the four Councils ſhould be joined with the Sacred Books(*o*).

The Emperor, hearing that they went about the Cities to engage them on their ſide; wrote to their Biſhop *Helias* to prevent it: who rejected the Emperor's letter, and refuſed. The Emperor then ſent ſoldiers; and the orthodox Monks, gathered by the orthodox Biſhops, expelled them the Church(*p*). The Emperor then expelled the Biſhop *Helias*, and put in *John*; but the Monks gained over *John* to their Party; and the Biſhops wrote to the Emperor, that they would defend the traditions even to Blood(*q*).

In the reign of *Juſtin*, things took another turn at Court; in favour of the Council. A Synod at *Jeruſalem* cried up the Council and cried down *Severus*—another at *Tyre* did the ſame; and another at *Rome* decreed the damnation of the three dead Biſhops, *Acacius*, *Euphemius*, and *Macedonius*. *Severus* (*r*) was ſeized and depoſed; and it is ſaid, he had his tongue plucked out; who had daily curſed the Council, eſpecially in the inſtalling letters, which he

(*o*) *Euagr.* IV. c. 9, 10. [See *Blackſtone's* Comment. Vol. IV. 49, 50. Stat. 9, 10. of *William* III. c. 33.]
(*p*) *Niceph.* XVI. 34. (*q*) *Ibid.* (*r*) *Euagr.* lib. IV. c. 4.

ſent

ſent to the Patriarchs in all places. And *Paulus* was made Biſhop, with orders to commend the Council; and the Council was cried-up among the moſt holy Churches(*s*).

After *Juſtin*, his Succeſſor *Juſtinian* reſolved alſo to ſet-up the Council of *Chalcedon*. He curſed *Severus*; and depoſed the two Patriarchs, *Anthemius* of *Conſtantinople*, and *Theodoſius* of *Alexandria*, for not ſubſcribing to the Council, but aſſerting one Nature in Chriſt; which was likewiſe the opinion of the Empreſs *Theodora*, who made all imaginable proviſion for thoſe who aſſerted only one Nature in *Chriſt*; whereas the Emperor believed two Natures, agreeably to the Council. However the Council was now publicly preached-up and aſſerted; and no body dared to curſe it any more: but thoſe, who would not embrace it, were compelled by innumerable ways to give their conſent to it, or were made obnoxious to moſt ſevere puniſhment: for *Juſtinian* was a violent Perſecuter. And from that time nothing of diſſenſion remained in the Churches over the whole world. And thus, by the help of Perſecution, *to keep all things tight*; the four firſt General Councils became the Teſts of Hereſy, together with the Four Evangeliſts. And it is upon theſe Councils, the laſt of which confirms the foregoing

(*s*) *Niceph.* XVI. 9.—For the Hiſtory in theſe pages, ſee *Baxter*'s Ch. Hiſt. 109, 112, 114, 125, 128.

ones,

ones, that the *Homöouſian* Doctrine depends: Every thing being Hereſy in *England*, which is declared to be ſo by the four firſt General Councils(*a*).

But I ſhould not deal fairly with my reader; if I did not acquaint him with the Miracle, which is ſaid to have happened to confirm the decrees of this Council; which in like manner confirms the foregoing ones of *Epheſus*, *Conſtantinople*, and *Nice*. "When the diſpute ran "high upon this ſubject, we are told by *Nice-* "*phorus*; that it pleaſed the Holy Ghoſt and "the famous men who met together, that their "determinations ſhould be written in a libel; "and the deciſion ſhould be committed to the "famous Martyr and Virgin *Euphemia*; who "was bred up at *Chalcedon*, as well as her An- "ceſtors. Under the impious *Diocleſian*, when "ſhe ſtood before the Tribunal of ſome wicked "Governor, ſhe declared; that *Chriſt* was *God*, "and the *Son of God*; upon which account "being excruciated with dreadful torments, "ſhe was at laſt caſt to the Beaſts; and was "killed by the bite of a Bear: and obtained "the Crown of her Sufferings for *Chriſt*; and "her *divine* body was preſerved whole and in- "corrupt in a marble tomb put up in the "Church at *Chalcedon*, where it performed the

(*a*) *Blackſtone*'s Comment. Vol. IV. p. 48, 49.

"Pro-

"Prodigies I have mentioned. Whereupon "the Orthodox, as well as their Opponents, "committing the determination to her immaculate and ſacred Body, as to a ſincere judge; "each of them ſeparately laid the form of their "Faith in a libel at her feet, ſafely folded and "ſealed: and after the night ſpent in prayer, "the next day they opened the Tomb; and "beheld a new ſight, worthy of a right [Orthodox] judgement. For the libel of the Orthodox was held faſt in the hands of the conquering Martyr: but the other, as a thing of "no value, thrown careleſsly at her feet. And "when Impudence contended againſt the true "Faith, after this celeſtial Determination; "their Condemnation was more fully confirmed "as moſt juſt: and they, who would not "conſent to the decrees of the Synod, gained Ignominy and Diſgrace from God and "Men: And the chief of the Heretics were "baniſhed to *Gangra*(*t*)."

Upon the whole, whoever looks into the Hiſtory of the four firſt General Councils, will find; that they were carried-on by violence and riot at the time; and by Knavery afterwards. The former of theſe aſſertions I truſt muſt appear true, from what has been already ſaid: and the latter, from the accuſations, which are brought by the Greek and Latin Churches

(*t*) *Nicep.* lib. XV. c. 5.

againſt

againſt each other, for corrupting and altering the Canons, and impoſing the decrees of one Council for thoſe of another of more authority.

The Editor of the General Councils at *Rome* informs us, in the Preface to the firſt Volume; that Time and the Fraud of Heretics, have been the cauſe, that the Acts of the ſaid Councils have not come to our hands ſafe; nor what remains of them pure and entire. And this teſtimony of theirs, ſays Mr. *Daillé*, is to Me worth a thouſand others; ſeeing it comes from ſuch, who, in my opinion, are evidently intereſted to ſpeak quite otherwiſe(*u*). And again; "when I conſider, ſays he, that the Legates of "Pope *Leo* would have impoſed upon the Coun-"cil of *Chalcedon* theſe words, *that the Church "of* Rome *hath always had the Primacy*, as a "Canon of the Council of *Nice*; I am almoſt "ready to think, that we have ſcarce any thing "of Antiquity left us; that is entire and uncor-"rupt: except it be in matters of Indifferency, "or what could not be corrupted without much "noiſe; and to take this proceeding of theirs, "which is come to our knowledge; as an ad-"vertiſement, purpoſely given us by divine "Providence; to let us ſee, with how much "conſideration and adviſedneſs, we ought to "receive for the Council of *Nice* and *Conſtan-"tinople*, that which goes at this Day for ſuch."

(*u*) *Daillé* Engl. p. 39.

Anaſtaſius Bibliothecarius, after he has very ſharply reproved the Ambition of the *Greeks*; and accuſed the Canons, which they produce of the third General Council, as forged and ſuppoſititious; to make ſhort work with them, ſays in plain terms; that the *Greeks* have corrupted all the Councils, except the firſt. What then have we now left to build upon, ſays Mr. *Daillé*; ſeeing this Corruption hath prevailed ſo far as the Councils, which are the very heart of the ancient monuments of the Church? And the unfortunate *Richerius*, upon occaſion of the Forgery of an Epiſtle from the Council of *Nice* to Pope *Sylveſter* to deſire his confirmation, obſerves; *Equidem cum maximo dolore animi*, &c. "I am obliged to ſay, with exceeding great "grief of mind; that there are no books, in "which there are ſo many and ſo egregiouſly "counterfeit and ſpurious writings, as may be "read in the tomes of the Councils(*x*)." And accordingly *Beza*, ſpeaking of them in the dedication of his New Teſtament, ſays; *quid, quod quorundam malitia, falſæ Epiſtolæ, ſuppoſita Decreta, ementiti Canones infiniti irrepſerunt.*

Now if neither the decrees of the Councils have authority; nor the preſent Copies of what are conſidered as ſuch are authentic; what a rotten foundation does the *homöouſian* Doctrine reſt on!—and whatever elſe is built upon them.

(*x*) Pref. in Synod. VIII. Tom. 3. Gen. Con.

This

This ſhort account of the ancient Councils may give us ſome notion, what uncertainty there is of meeting with any thing more than mere nominal and temporary Orthodoxy in their decrees; concerning which we may venture to ſay, in the words of *Rabſhekah:* "Now "behold, thou truſteſt to this ſtaff of a broken "reed; on which if a man lean, it will go into "his hand and pierce it: So is the Authority of "theſe General Councils to thoſe who truſt to "it." And the more modern Councils are to the full as bad as the ancient ones: For men of all ages are much alike; and make uſe of all advantage, whether right or wrong, to deceive or impoſe upon mankind, and promote their ſeveral parties and intereſts.—And "therefore "thoſe, who call themſelves Proteſtants, inſiſt "upon a *national* Council; being perſuaded, "that what is called a *general Council* is only a "vain phantom, which the Popes make uſe of "to deceive the World; a machine which their "Legates move as they pleaſe(*y*)." But that my Readers may be more fully convinced of this, and of the miſchief that ariſes to the Church from ſuch General Councils; I beg leave to direct them to the hiſtory of the Council of *Trent*, written by Father *Paul*; whoſe chief deſign is, to ſhew; that the Pope's Legates left the Council no kind of Liberty: that

(*y*) *Daillé*, 59, 39. Hiſt. Concil. Lib. I. p. 36. Lett. de *Vargas*, p. 5.

the Biſhops, who compoſed it, decided upon matters which they did not underſtand; [juſt as *Sabinus* complained they did at *Nice*] and inſtead of reforming their abuſes, the Council hath ſo far confirmed them; that there is no longer any means to remedy them. Let the Reader to the ſame purpoſe conſult the Letters and Memoirs of *Vargas*—ſome particulars of which he may find in Biſhop *Burnet*'s Hiſtory of the Reformation(*a*).

"This *Spaniſh* Lawyer, *Le Vaſſor* tells us, "was a great enemy to the Proteſtants; but "had Light and Equity enough, to make him "deplore the ſlavery of the Council; to diſ-"cover the Irregularities and Artifices in the "Conduct of the Popes and their Legates; to "condemn highly the abuſes and nullity of "their Proceeding; and foretell, that, far "from curing the Evils of the Church, ſuch a "Synod would render them incurable! and "both theſe Writers [Father *Paul* and *Vargas*["give us a clear and more preciſe Idea of the "manner in which the affairs of the Council "were managed, and of the Ignorance of the "greateſt part of the good Fathers that were "preſent at it(*b*)."

In ſhort, the depending upon the Authority of theſe Councils, and putting human Placits

(*a*) Vol. III. p. 177. (*b*) *Le Vaſſer*'s Pref. to *Vargas*'s Letters.

upon

upon a level with the Scripture as the Teſt of Orthodoxy, is not only the fundamental principle of the grand Apoſtaſy; but will infallibly lead back the Proteſtants, if they follow it, into all the Depths of Popery, Ignorance, and Superſtition. It is certain, beyond all doubt, that the more theſe human deciſions have prevailed in the Church, the more the Scriptures have been neglected. And thus the grand Apoſtaſy from the Word of God to the Commandments of Men, prevailed more and more over the Goſpel, with little reſiſtance for many ages, till the time of *Luther*; when the BIBLE began to be conſidered by the Proteſtants as the only Rule of Faith: (for they could not defend themſelves upon any other Principle, than that of the Scripture or Chriſtian Verity, againſt the human decrees, which conſtituted what the Papiſts called the *Catholic Religion)*. But no ſooner were their learned Divines thoroughly ſatisfied; that the Scripture was the only Rule of Faith, that could be depended upon with ſafety; than they all, in their ſeveral Churches, as if by a general infatuation, reſolved to ſubſtitute ſome human Compoſition, either in its ſtead; or in partnerſhip with it. Thus they deſerted the fundamental Articles of the Reformation, which held them together in one body; and by admitting human Teſts of Hereſy, compoſed by men of very different ſentiments, have divided

divided and ſubdivided into mere ſects and parties, rather than Churches; weakened themſelves, as Proteſtants, againſt the common Adverſary; and encouraged a continual hatred and animoſity againſt one another. For it is but too true; that, whenever the decrees of Councils, or even of particular Churches, have come into competition with the Scripture; they have generally overborne it: and the Churches have been more determined in defence of their peculiarities, than to ſecure the general Doctrines of Chriſtianity; and the common people more furious againſt one another upon ſuch differences; than if they had broken all the Commandments.—And theſe human Compoſitions have been defended of late, by the modern *Theodoſii*, in ſuch an extraordinary manner; eſpecially in degrading the uſe of Scripture, and its ſufficiency as a Rule of Faith; that if we were to judge of the preſent ſtate of Proteſtantiſm by the Arguments lately uſed by theſe writers; we ſhould be tempted to obſerve, that the Toe of the Proteſtant comes ſo near the Heel of the Papiſt, that it galls his Kibe(*a*).

(*a*) *Shakeſpear.*

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

That the Homöouſian *doctrine, as explained and maintained by the learned among the Ancients and Moderns, is a heap of Confuſion and Inconſiſtency.*

HAVING examined into the Authority by which the *homöouſian* doctrine is eſtabliſhed, and ſhewn it to be by no means ſatisfactory; much leſs ſo certain, as to be made an argument againſt the actual deſcent of Chriſt from Heaven and his Suffering for Mankind; I ſhall now conſider, what the Chriſtian Divines have advanced, to explain and eſtabliſh it upon the foot of Reaſon and Argument.

It is a ſtrange thing to think; that the Chriſtians will not be content with the account given them by the Evangeliſts, concerning the miraculous Generation of *Jeſus Chriſt*, by the Holy Ghoſt, of the Virgin *Mary*; in which all Chriſtians and even Mahometans are agreed; upon account of which the Evangeliſt tells us, that he was called the Son of God (*a*); and by the belief of which, they are ſatisfied of his divine miſſion: but they will preſumptuouſly take upon them to eſtabliſh, under pain of damna-

(*a*) *Luke* i. 35.

tion,

tion, a particular explanation of his antemundane and eternal Generation: though all the Fathers, from *Irenæus*, freely acknowledge it to be inſcrutable; and what the Scripture has no where revealed.

That *Jeſus Chriſt* is the Son of God, and that he is ἐκ Θεοῦ and ἐκ πατρὸς, of God and of the Father; is allowed by all (*b*); nor will any one of the different ſects ſcruple to aſſert it, according to the definition of *Tertullian*; that every Origin is a Parent, and every thing that ariſes from an Origin is an Offspring (*c*): nor even, according to the words of *Athanaſius*; that whatever is *of* or *from* any one, is the Son of him from whom he is; and whatever is *of* or *from* the Father, is his Son(*d*). For all this, in a figurative Senſe, may be admitted; as the word Son was uſed by the *Platoniſts*, when they called the *World* the *Son of God*. Whereas, in a ſtrict and literal Senſe, it is not true, that every *Origin* is a *Parent*; and any thing that is *of* or *from* any thing, is a Son: as Biſhop *Pearſon* obſerves of *Eve*, who was not the daughter of *Adam*; though ſhe was *of* or *from* him. But

(*b*) This ſame expreſſion, ἐκ Θεοῦ, is uſed with relation to men; as in I *Jo.* iii. 9. v. 1, 4. And ſo the Spirit of Life is ἐκ Θεοῦ. *Rev.* xi. 11.

(*c*) Omnis origo eſt parens; omne quod ab origine profectum Progenies. *Tertul.* adv. *Prax.* c. 8.

(*d*) Quicquid ab aliquo eſt, ejus Filium eſſe unde eſt. *Athan.* op. tom. I. p. 530, and 539.

when

when the *Athanaſians* preſumed to declare; that nothing is of the Father, except the Word; which comes from his Heart, and is begotten from his Bowels (*e*); many Sects among the Chriſtians were ſtartled, and the *Arians* in particular were highly offended, and with the greateſt vehemence oppoſed it; declaring that according to this doctrine, the Father muſt be a compound Being, diviſible and mutable: and therefore they denied the Fact.

Biſhop *Pearſon* indeed inſinuates, that the *Arians* only *pretended* to refuſe the word *homöouſios* upon this account; leaſt they ſhould admit a real compoſition and diviſion in the Deity: and yet he quotes the following words from *Jerom*, in the very next ſentence; which prove it to be *no Pretence*: "*Origen*, as well as "*Arius* and *Eunomius*, denies the Son to be pro- "duced or born: leaſt the Father ſhould be "divided into Parts(*f*)." And *Arius* objects to the word *Homöouſios*, in his letter to Biſhop *Alexander*, as follows—"If we underſtand, I "come, and I came, from the bowels of the "Father, as a part of the *homöouſion* or an Emiſ- "ſion or Production, as ſome do; the Father "muſt be compounded, diviſible and muta-

(*e*) Τὸ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς υἱός ἐστι. τί δέ ἐστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς; εἰ μὴ ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐκ καρδίας προελθὼν καὶ ἐκ γαστρὸς γεννηθείς. *Athan.* op. tom. I. p. 539.

(*f*) *Hierom.* Apol. 2. in Ruff. p. 135.

"ble(*g*)." But it is very remarkable, and ſhews the weakneſs of the beſt of men; that the opinions of the *Arians* are ſcarce ever mentioned by the *Orthodox* Chriſtians, (as they are called) without ſome little falſification or miſrepreſentation; in order to manifeſt their zeal for the Truth.

But to proceed. When the Emperor *Conſtantine* found it impracticable to ſilence the diſpute upon this ſubject, he endeavoured, as well as he could, to explain and ſoften the Terms that were made uſe of in it. And *Euſebius* ſays; He ſatisfied the Biſhops, that the word *homöouſios* was not to be underſtood according to the affection of Bodies: for he argued, that as the divine Subſtance is incapable of Diviſion or Section; the Generation from the divine Subſtance muſt conſequently be effected without any diviſion or ſection: *divinis arcaniſque rationibus*; in a divine and unknown manner(*h*).—To which it was anſwered, not only by the *Arians*, but by all the *Homöouſians*, who differed from the *Athanaſians*; that ſuch a Generation from the divine Subſtance, was a thing impoſſible: and it was premature to explain *how* or in what manner the generation was effected; before it was proved that there was any ſuch thing. That a Son included a diviſion from the Subſtance, from which it was generated, in the very idea of it;

(*g*) See the Letter of *Arius* to Biſhop *Alexander*, in the Append. No. I. (*h*) *Niceph.* lib. viii. c. 22.

and

and conſequently it was inconſiſtent with the divine Incorruptibility, or ἀφθαρσία, to ſuppoſe it. And this was the argument uſed by the *Sabellians*, who were *homöouſians* in the ſtricteſt ſenſe; that if the Son was ſo begotten of the Father's Subſtance, as to be a diſtinct Subſtance; there muſt be neceſſarily a diviſion of the paternal Eſſence(*i*). And *Origen*, who was neither *Sabellian* nor *Arian*, argues in the ſame manner, againſt *Septimius*; "Some, ſays he, explain *I* "*came out from God*; to ſignify I was begotten "by God. But this ſenſe of the words will re- "quire us to ſay, that the Son was begotten of "the Father's Subſtance, which was thereby "diminiſhed; and, after the Generation of the "Son, was without the Subſtance of the Son, "which it had before:" and he aſſerts, two "pages farther on, that the Generation of the Son cannot be out of the Father's Subſtance, without a diminution of the paternal Eſſence(*k*). And all the *Antihomöouſians* argued in the ſame manner. And it was to avoid being charged with holding this opinion, viz. that the paternal Subſtance was divided; (which the *Arians* charged upon the *Athanaſians*, as the conſequence of their Doctrines;) that the Council of

(*i*) *Bulli* op. p. 33. (*k*) Hoc autem poſtulat ut dicatur genitum fuiſſe ex Subſtantia Patris velut minorati, μειωμένου, & carentis Subſtantia filii poſtquam genuiſſet, quam prius habuit. Com. in *Joh.* p. 306, 308.

Nice anathematiſed thoſe who held it: And *Athanaſius* calls the argument a Sophiſm; and endeavours artfully to ſhift-off the charge upon the *Arians*, as if they held it themſelves; becauſe they had objected to it as the conſequence of the *homöouſian* Doctrine. "Some, ſays he, "deny the Conſubſtantiality; and underſtand "the word *homöouſios*, *corporaliter*; as if God "was material and diviſible, like Body."— But however, it muſt be confeſſed; that the *Athanaſians*, notwithſtanding their Anathemas at the end of the *Nicene* Creed, have given their adverſaries ſome handle, from their manner of expreſſing themſelves at other times; as well as its being the unavoidable Conſequence of the *Homöouſian* Doctrine, to believe they had ſome notion of Body in the divine Eſſence; though they did not allow of the Conſequences, which were charged upon their principles; viz. that Communication of Subſtance implies Diviſion of Subſtance; for the *diviſibility* of the Divine Subſtance, was denied by all parties. However, the *Athanaſians* ſometimes ſay, the generation of the Son was a communication of Subſtance, a derivation, a production; as a tree from its root, the river from the fountain, the ray from the Sun, or light from light (*l*): all which are ſimilitudes taken from *material*

(*l*) *Bulli* op. p. 34.

objects,

objects, or body; and convey the Idea of Diviſion.

But the *Athanaſians* were not the firſt who ſpake in this manner. *Origen* ſays of Chriſt, that God has communicated his magnitude to him; that, as he is the image of the inviſible God, he may preſerve the image of the Father in regard to magnitude: for he would not be a proportionate and beautiful image; unleſs he exhibited the image of his magnitude(*m*). He is leſs than the Father originally, ſays Biſhop *Bull*; but equal in magnitude: and again; *tantus eſt filius, quantus eſt pater Deus*(*n*). And he ſays of *Irenæus*; The holy man, as in a rapture, *(mente ſubito quaſi volatu in ſublime evectâ)* ſees God to be ſo great a Lover of Proportion; that he was not willing a *meaſure* of himſelf ſhould be wanting, by which his infinity and immenſity ſhould be *as it were* circumſcribed: which he confirms by this famous and notable ſaying of a certain Catholic writer; "The im-"menſe Father himſelf is meaſured in his Son; "for the Son is the meaſure of the Father, be-"cauſe he contains him." And *Greg. Thaumat.* tells us, in the ſame unintelligible Style; that God the Father ſurrounds himſelf by his Son. The word is ἐκπερίγραι(*o*).

Now all theſe expreſſions have an immediate relation to bodily Subſtance; and might eaſily

(*m*) *Bulli* op. 262. (*n*) *Ib.* 263. (*o*) *Ib.* 79.

miſlead

miſlead men, with regard to the *Athanaſian* principles; as they did *Ruffinus* and others, with regard to *Origen*; whom they looked-upon as an *Anthropomorphite*(*p*). But this ought not to occaſion any diſpute; becauſe the *Athanaſians* never mean'd that ſuch expreſſions ſhould be taken in a ſtrict philoſophical ſenſe; but only uſed them as elucidations, to make themſelves the better underſtood. What the *Arians* and *Athanaſians* differed upon, was the Nature of the divine Subſtance; which was allowed by all parties to be indiviſible and immaterial: And the queſtion to be ſolved, was merely a queſtion in Philoſophy, viz. whether the divine Subſtance *generates*; or whether Generation of Subſtance, material or immaterial, neceſſarily implies *Diviſion*.—Of theſe queſtions the Scripture informs us nothing; they are beyond the confines of Revelation, and can only be diſcuſſed by arguments drawn from Philoſophy; as *Euſebius* ſeems to allow, when ſpeaking of the word *homöouſios*, as explained by *Conſtantine*, he ſays; "In this manner our wiſe religious Prince "philoſophiſed upon theſe Subjects(*q*)." And accordingly Dr. *Whitby* aſks the following queſtions—

1. Where hath the Scripture ſaid, that the individual Eſſence of the Father hath been communicated to the Son or Holy Ghoſt; or

(*p*) *Dupin*, 135. (*q*) *Niceph.* lib. VIII. c. 22.

that

that they derive the ſame individual Eſſence from the Eſſence of the Father; or have the ſame individual Eſſence with him; and ſo are the ſame God?

2. Where hath the Scripture ſaid, that the Son proceedeth from the Father, by a neceſſary Emanation; or by an eternal Production within the Eſſence of the Father?

3. Where hath the Scripture ſaid, that three Perſons can exiſt in one numerical Eſſence(*r*)? &c.

It is certain, that none of theſe queſtions are determined in the Scripture; and therefore can only be diſcuſſed from Principles of Reaſon or Philoſophy.

In like manner the preſent queſtion I am conſidering concerning the antemundane Generation of *Jeſus Chriſt*, is no where explained in Scripture; and yet the Chriſtians have written a great deal about it; and accounted for it, upon different principles of Philoſophy; according to their own fancies. Sometimes we are told; that the eternal Generation of Chriſt means his Coexiſtence with the Father from Eternity; ſometimes, *that* by which he was *produced* and *received his exiſtence*; [τὸ εἶναι, upon the principle of *Athenagoras* τὸ ὃν ὃ γένεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴ ὄν.] ſometimes *that* by which he received his *Subſtance*, *as* the *Logos*; or *that* by which he

(*r*) *Whitby*'s Laſt Thoughts, p. 29.

was

was begotten into a Son, after his exiſtence as an Attribute; ſometimes his Manifeſtation to create; and ſometimes it is ſaid to mean, that he is always generating and generated; like Light from the Sun. And as the Chriſtians argue ſometimes from one of theſe notions, and ſometimes from another; they have made the whole ſyſtem taken together to be a heap of Inconſiſtency and Contradiction.

Biſhop *Bull*, ſpeaking of the Generation of Chriſt, defines it to be *that*, by which, *as the Word* of God, he was born of the Mind of the Father from Eternity(*s*): or, as he ſays in another place from *Athanaſius*, his firſt nativity or Generation was *that*, by which *as the Word* he *exiſted* from *Eternity* of the Father, and with the Father; as being the *coeternal offspring* of the *eternal mind* of the Father. This, he ſays, is the only proper Nativity of the Son; by which he is the *Word* of God, and *God*(*t*). And on account of this Nativity, *Athanaſius* ſuppoſes, as we are told by Biſhop *Bull*, that the Son is called in Scripture the *only begotten*; and that the Son is *of* the Father only becauſe he receives *from* the Father the beginning and

(*s*) *Qua, ut Logos, ex mente Patris, ab æterno natus fuit. Bulli* op. p. 100.

(*t*) *Qua, ut Logos, ab æterno ex patre & apud Patrem exiſtit; utpote æternæ mentis paternæ coeterna Progeniei. Hæc ſola eſt τῦ Λόγυ, qua Dei Logos, & Deus eſt, vera & proprie dicta Nativitas.*

original

original of his *Subſtance*(*u*): and in another place he ſays; that the true and proper Generation of any perſon or thing is that by which it is *made* or *produced*(*x*). So that, according to theſe definitions, 1. Chriſt as the Word of God was coeternal with the eternal Mind of which he was the offspring.—2. And he was called the only begotten, and the Son; becauſe he received from the Father the *beginning* and origin of his *Subſtance*; and 3. his Generation was that, by which he was *brought into Being*.—It will be no eaſy matter to reconcile theſe three accounts; eſpecially, if it be conſidered as the general opinion of the Fathers, and the particular opinion of *Athanaſius*; that Chriſt exiſted, *before* he was begotten into a *Subſtance*.

Dr. *Waterland* does not ſeem to agree with Biſhop *Bull*, though equally Orthodox; for whereas the Biſhop tells us, the firſt Generation of the Son was *that* by which he *was born*, was the *offspring*, was *produced*, had the *beginning* and origin of his Subſtance, as an eternal offspring, &c. Dr. *Waterland* ſays; he was *in* the Father, *before* he was generated; and *this* was the moſt proper Filiation or Generation;

(*u*) *Ob hanc Nativitatem* τὸν μονογενῆ *in Scripturis dici ipſum cenſuit* Athanaſius; *qui et eo ſolo nomine exiſtimavit filium eſſe* ἐκ πατρὸς· *hoc eſt, ex Patre initium & originem ſubſtantiæ ſuæ traxiſſe.* P. 232.

(*x*) *Vera & propria Rei vel Perſonæ cujuspiam generatio ea ſola eſt dicenda, qua illa γίνεται, ſive producitur.* P. 107.

and *this* he ſuppoſes to have been a mere *Coexiſtence*, and not any *Derivation*. But it is difficult to conceive, how his *Coexiſtence* with the Father could be a *Filiation*; or how he could be a *Son*, *before* he was begotten.

The expreſſion which the Biſhop uſes, that the Son exiſted *eternally* with the Father; (I ſuppoſe he means as the Attribute of Wiſdom) ſeems to agree with Dr. *Waterland*'s notion of a *Coexiſtence*: but this was never called a *Generation*, by any of the Fathers; and the Biſhop expreſſes himſelf fully againſt this opinion, by declaring with *Athanaſius*, that the firſt Generation was a *Production*.

Now, if Dr. *Waterland*'s notion be true, that there was *no Production* or Derivation in the Generation of the Son, but merely a *Coexiſtence*; the *Father* might as well be called the *Son*, on account of his Coexiſtence with the *Logos*; as the *Logos*, on account of his Coexiſtence with the *Father*: Indeed, we have no reaſon to imagine, that Dr. *Waterland* would be at all ſhocked at the conſequence; becauſe he confeſſes, that he ſees no Impoſſibility why the Father might not be the Son; and the Son the Father(*y*): and all thoſe who inform us of a *private Council* of the *Trinity* before the world began, in which the Oeconomy of the three

(*y*) See *Philaleth. Cantab.* p. 46. and Part. II. p. 12, 19.—*Waterland*'s Def. p. 177.

perſons

perſons was ſettled by agreement; may think in the ſame manner. But others, who conſider the nature of *neceſſary* and *unoriginate exiſtence*; and that the Father muſt be *neceſſarily* what he is, or *not be at all*; will ſee, that it may be concluded from ſuch premiſes; that it is only a *chance*, that there happens to be either a Father or Son(z); and, as neither of them could exiſt by *chance*, neither of them could exiſt at all; and there would be no neceſſarily exiſtent Being; nor any other.

But farther; If this Generation be only a *Coexiſtence*, as Dr. *Waterland* ſuppoſes, and not a *Derivation* or Production; then there muſt be two *unoriginate*, and conſequently two *ſelf-exiſtent* Beings: or two *Gods*. For *Athanaſius* truely obſerves, τὸ συνυπάρχον, &c. omne coexiſtens non ſibi, ſed alteri coexiſtit(a): nothing can be *coexiſtent* with *itſelf*; but with *another*. And if this be the conſequence of Dr. *Waterland*'s opinion, it muſt be falſe; and it ſhould ſeem that the Son of God muſt be, as Biſhop *Bull* aſſerts, a *Production*; and then his firſt Generation will not be merely a *Coexiſtence*, as Dr. *Waterland* ſuppoſes; but an *Origination*, by which he received his Exiſtence: τὸ ἀυτὸ εἶναι, as *Damaſcen* expreſſes it(b): and his Generation will be that quâ ἐγένετο by which he received

(z) Letter I. p. 131. (a) *Whitby* Diſq. mod. p. 52. (b) De Orthod. Fid. c. x.

the beginning and origin of his Exiſtence; as Biſhop *Bull* ſays.

But this opinion of Biſhop *Bull* is liable to ſome Objections; the firſt of which ariſes from his calling the Son a *Coeternal* offspring: and affirming that he was with God from eternity.—But by this the Biſhop may perhaps mean no more; than that the divine Subſtance was eternal, from which the Son was generated; as the *Platoniſts* called their inferior Gods *eternal*, becauſe they were ſuppoſed to be formed out of the eternal *Pſyche*; and ſo eternal as to their Subſtance, though not as to their perſonal Exiſtence(*c*): as when the Apoſtle ſays of *Levi*, that he was in the Loins of his Father (*Abraham*), when *Melchiſedek* met him(*d*); or he might mean *eternal*, as it is explained by *Chryſoſtom* and others to ſignify exiſtence before time was meaſured by days and hours: but he could not mean, that *Chriſt* had no beginning; becauſe he declares in direct words, that the Father alone is God of himſelf; and the Son is of God, or *from* God; and had from Him the beginning of his Subſtance, and was produced: for which reaſon, he ſays, the ancients did not ſcruple to call the Father the *one* and *only* God; becauſe he is the *beginning*, *cauſe*, *author*, and *fountain* of the Son(*e*).—It is therefore moſt probable; that, when the Biſhop

(*c*) Let. I. p. 158. (*d*) *Heb.* vii. 10. (*e*) *Bulli* op. p. 232.

uſes

uſes this apparent Contradiction, viz. a *coeternal offspring*, he conſiders *Chriſt* according to the notion of the Fathers and Council of *Nice*, as the eternal *Word* or *Attribute of Wiſdom* exiſting in the divine mind and *coeternal* with it; and afterwards generated into a *Subſtantial Being*. And this ſeems to be the reaſon, that the Biſhop expreſſes himſelf ſo preciſely; UT LOGOS *natus fuit*; and *Athanaſius* ſays, that by his Generation he received the beginning [not of his Exiſtence, but] of his Subſtance. And it is from the ſame principle that *Euſebius* ſays; "the Emperor *Conſtantine* proved, with "reſpect even to the *divine Generation*, that the "*Word* had a *prior exiſtence* before all ages: "for as much as, *before* his *actual* Generation, "he was *potentially* in the Father, in an *unbe-*"*gotten* manner; the Father having been "always Father, as alſo always King, and "always Saviour, and potentially all things, "always ſimilar and without any change(*f*)."

And

(*f*) Καὶ καλὰ τὴν ἴδιον αὐλῦ γέννησιν τὸ πρὸ πάντων αἰώνων εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐπεὶ κ᾽ πρὶν ἐνεργείᾳ γενηθῆναι δυνάμει ἦν ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ἀγεννήτως, ὄντος τᾦ πατρὸς ἀεὶ. *Euſeb.* Epiſt. ad Eccleſ. Cæſ. apud *Theod.* lib. I. c. 12. Here we ſee to demonſtration; that, when the Fathers ſpeak of an *eternal* Generation, they do not uſe the word *Eternal* to mean a ſtrict philoſophical Eternity; but merely a Generation before all time. For they call the Generation of Chriſt *eternal*; and yet allow, that he was *potentially* in the Father, in an unbegotten manner,

And this was the opinion of *Athenagoras*, *Theophilus*, *Clemens Alex.* *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and others; and involves the ſubject in innumerable difficulties(*g*).

What the Fathers in general believed of this matter is perfectly agreeable to the philoſophy of the Platoniſts; that the *eternal Wiſdom* of the Father, that Attribute by which God himſelf is wiſe, (which the Platoniſts called Αὐτοσοφία, and Λογος ἐνδιαθετος, the *internal* Word or Reaſon(*h*),) was *begotten into a Son*, and became the Λόγος προφορικος, the *external* Word or Reaſon; being ſent forth by God, when he created the world. Thus *Athenagoras* and *Tatian* ſpeak of a Son that was in God in Idea and Power, unbegotten, and unſubſtantial, before his actual

manner, before he was generated:—In the ſame unphiloſophical and lax ſenſe, *Euſebius* calls the Angels ἄχρονοι, &c. *Whitby* Diſq. mod. Lect. xxix, xxx. Whereas the word Eternal in a ſtrict ſenſe excludes the Exiſtence of any thing before it; and can therefore only properly belong to the one Self-exiſtent and Unoriginate God: So that if Chriſt was the Attribute of Wiſdom, he was *properly* Eternal: but his Generation afterwards is *improperly* called Eternal.

(*g*) This diſpute, whether the Father was Father before he had a Son, was afterwards renewed with ſuch violence between *Dorotheus* and *Marinus*, that the Multitude divided: *Dorotheus* remained in his Church; and new ones were built for the followers of *Marinus*. *Niceph.* lib. XII. c. 36.

(*h*) *Cudworth*, Int. Syſ. 575.

Exiſtence

Exiſtence as a Perſon; juſt as the Platoniſts ſpake of the *World*, which they called the Son of God; as being both created and eternal: ſometimes conſidering it as the ideal World, exiſting always in the divine mind; and ſometimes as ſent forth into real Exiſtence(*i*): not conſidering, that what exiſts in the divine mind only in Idea, hath no exiſtence at all; the Idea indeed exiſts, but the thing itſelf does not. So that the *Logos* could not poſſibly be a real Son, till he was begotten.

Euſebius on the contrary ſpeaks of the *Logos*, as being *always* with the Father, *as a Son:* and *Theodoret* ſays, he was *always* in the Father in an *unbegotten* manner(*k*): but ſurely, if it was in an *unbegotten* manner; it was *not* as a Son: and yet *Arius* mentions ſomewhere a much ſtronger expreſſion, which is uſed by the *Athanaſians*; viz. that he was *unbegotten*, and *begotten in an unbegotten manner*. *Ingenitus eſt, ingenite genitus eſt*. *Tertullian* on the contrary ſays, that God was not *always* a *Father*; and that there was a time, when the *Son* was *not*(*l*)—that the internal wiſdom of God was begotten and made into a Perſon, juſt before the Creation of the World; that the Word, which he diſtinguiſhes from Reaſon, was not from the beginning; but

(*i*) *Ibid.* 254.—*Whitby* Diſ. mod. 56. (*k*) *Theod.* Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib. I. c. 12.—Eſſay on Spirit, 145.
(*l*) Adv. *Herm.* c. 3.

the

the divine Reaſon was before it; *quia non Sermonalis a principio, ſed Rationalis Deus etiam ante Principium*(m).—*Novatian* declares expreſsly; that the *Proceſſion* of the Son, which was done when it pleaſed God; that is, when he would create the World, was what made the Son a *Second Perſon*. And moſt of the Fathers tell us; that, *before* the Word was generated, it was in the *heart* of God, in the *womb* of his underſtanding, in his *bowels*; from whence it came forth, as from its bud and ſeed(n). *Theophilus* ſays; God having his Word internally in his bowels, begat him (o): and again, he begat him externally; who was internally in his heart(p). And ſo *Athanaſius*; what is of or from the Father? except the Word which cometh forth from his heart, and is born out of his belly (q)? And *Dupin* ſays, the Fathers declare, that the Word is eternal; and was from all eternity *in* God; as his Council, his Wiſdom, and his Word(r).

Biſhop *Bull* acknowledges *Athenagoras* to mean; that the Son is the *ſame* in reſpect to the *Father*; as the *internal Reaſon* is to the *Mind*

(m) Adv. *Prax.* c. 5. (n) *Le Platon.* devoil. c. xiii.

(o) ἔχων ἦν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτῦ Λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἐγέννησεν ἑαυτόν. Ad *Autol.* 81.

(p) ἐνδιάθετον ἐν καρδίᾳ ἑαυτῦ ἐγέννησε προφόρικον.

(q) τί δέ ἐστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, εἰ μὴ ὁ Λόγος, ὁ ἐκ καρδίας προελθὼν, ὃν ἐν γαστρὸς γεννᾶται; *Athan.* tom. I. p. 539.—*Bull*, 208.

(r) *Dupin* Bib. in verbo *Theophilus*.

of

of man. And *Suffridas*, the learned Commentator upon *Athenagoras*, freely confeſſes; that this Author meaned by the Son's being the *Word*, that he was the *rational Faculty* of God the Father; and, *as ſuch*, was unbegotten and coeternal with him: becauſe the Father was never any more *without* his Reaſon, than a living Creature is *without* Life(*s*). And Dr. *Whitby* obſerves it to have been the common opinion of the *Antenicene* Fathers, that the Word or Son of God was always *in* the Father, and *coexiſted* with him *internally*; *becauſe* the Father was always λογικὸς; that is, *rational*(*t*).— The ſame was clearly the Opinion of Biſhop *Alexander*, in his letter againſt *Arius*; in which he argues for the abſolute Eternity of the *Word*, as follows; "If the Son be the *Word* and the "*Wiſdom* of the Father; how can there be a "Time, when he was not? for it is the ſame "as to ſay, that there was a time when God "was both without his Wiſdom and his "Word(*u*)."

It appears from hence; that the *Homöouſians* were quite at a loſs, how to explain their own Syſtem; in which they differed as much from one another, as they did from the *Arians*. They all agreed; that the Son exiſted before

(*s*) Reply to Dr. *Waterland's* Def. 108, 283.
(*t*) *Whitby* Diſq. mod. p. 127.
(*u*) *Socrat.* Eccl. Hiſt. lib. I.

his generation, ſome how or other; and thereby contradicted their own definitions, that the generation of any thing is that, *qua γίνεται· by which it receives its Exiſtence*; and again, τὸ ὂν ὃ γίνεται, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴ ὄν. One ſays, he exiſted in *Idea* and *Power*; another ſays, *as a Son:* the Emperor and *Theodoret* ſay; *potentially*, in an *unbegotten* manner; which ſeems to mean *not as a Son:* and yet the Emperor ſays, the Father was *always* Father: and if ſo, the Son muſt have been *always* the Son.—*Tertullian*, *Novatian*, and *Athanaſius* are expreſs, that he exiſted *prior* to his generation; but *not* as a Son: ſome ſay, *as* the *divine Wiſdom*; *Tertullian* ſays, *as the divine Wiſdom Tacitly exerted in Thought* (*x*); &c. But that an unchangeable Being ſhould exiſt *one while* as the unſubſtantial Wiſdom of the Father, and *afterwards* be generated into a Subſtantial Being diſtinct from the Perſon of the Father; ſeems to be a Contradiction: and it is as inconceivable, in what Senſe an *Attribute* can be *generated* into a Subſtantial Being; as how a Subſtantial Being can be generated out of length, breadth, and thickneſs; and a Trinity of Subſtances be formed out of the properties of a Cube. However this is the divinityof the Fathers; in order to oppoſe the doctrine of *Arius*, that the *generation* of Chriſt was the *beginning* of his Exiſtence; which was looked-upon as Hereſy in

(*x*) Adv. *Prax.* c. 5.

Arius,

Arius, though allowed to be orthodox in his oppoſers(*y*).

But here we meet with farther difficulties; for if the opinion of theſe Fathers be true, that the *Reaſon* of God or his *Word* was the eternal Faculty of the Father; and came forth from the bowels of his Underſtanding, &c. how is this conſiſtent with what is ſaid, that the Father was never *without* his Word or Reaſon? Is not this to ſay, as Biſhop *Alexander* accuſes *Arius*, that there was a time when God was not wiſe; as being without his Wiſdom or his Word(*z*). Or did the *Word* go forth from the womb of his Underſtanding, and continue *in it* all the while? I anſwer; the Fathers ſpeak of this in ſuch a manner, that it is impoſſible to know what they mean. *Dupin* tells us, that the Word did go forth ſomehow; *en quelque maniere*: Biſhop *Bull* ſays; *quaſi, even as it were*: and explains the opinion of *Theophilus* to be, that he came forth from the divine mind; without being *ſeparated* from it(*a*). And this, he tells us, is the Catholic Faith. And, if this be the Truth, whenever we read that Chriſt or the Holy Ghoſt

(*y*) *Au'ſtin* ſays, Plerumque dicit Chriſtus, *dedit mihi Pater*; in quo vult intelligi quod eum genuerit Pater; non ut tanquam jam *exiſtenti & non habenti* dederit aliquid; ſed ipſum dediſſe ut haberet, genuiſſe ut ESSET. De Trin. lib. I. c. 12. And *Damaſcen* ſays, πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα, ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχει, καὶ τὸ ἀΐδιον εἶναι.. De Orthod. Fid. c. 8. (*z*) *Bull*, 216. (*a*) *Ibid.* 231.

proceeded and *came forth* from the Father(*b*), we are to underſtand, it was only *quaſi*, and not in *reality*. It is ſomewhat remarkable however, that when *Chriſt* ſaith, I came forth from the Father, and came into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father (*c*); that his diſciples ſaid to him, now ſpeakeſt thou *plainly*; and ſpeakeſt no Proverb.—But *ſurely* never words were *leſs* plain, or *more utterly unintelligible*; if *Chriſt* was never *ſeparate* from the Father: and he neither came into this world, nor departed out of it *perſonally*; but only *quaſi*, and ὑ ἰπρνία, as Biſhop *Bull* ſpeaks of it(*d*).

Euſebius ſays; the power of the Word, even when it deſcended from the Father, continued *in* the Father (*e*): ſo that a *demiſſion* from and *Deſcent* of the Son *from* the Father is ſuppoſed to be conſiſtent, according to the Fathers, with his abiding *inſeparably in* the Father all the time of his demiſſion or coming down from the Father; and in the ſame manner, his *Wiſdom* or *Word* came forth from the Father; by continuing where it was before.

(*b*) *John* viii. 42. xv. 26. (*c*) *Ibid.* xvi. 28, 29.
(*d*) Biſhop *Bull* ſays, *quaſi progreſſio*, 230. and *quaſi exiviſſe*, 232. and *tanquam ex utero exivit* καθ' ὑπρνίαν, 100.
(*e*) *Verbi Virtutem, etiam dum ita ſe demittit, perfectiſſime & proxime cum Deo Patre converſari, intraque ipſum manentem ineffabilis* [*ineffabiliter*] *ejus arcanis perfrui. Bull*, p. 231.

Another

Another difficulty ſeems to be this; that if the going forth from God the Father, was no *real Separation*; ſuch as is included in the Idea of a Son; but only *quaſi progreſſio*; the generation will be only *quaſi generatio*, which means we know not what(*f*). The great *Baſil* indeed, as quoted by Biſhop *Bull*, tells us boldly; that a *Conjunction* and *Diſjunction* at the ſame time are very conſiſtent; though it can neither be explained in words, nor conceived in our thoughts(*g*). And ſo the Edict of the Emperor *Juſtin* runs, when he ſpeaks of the Trinity; that it is *indiviſibly-divided* and *diviſibly-conjoined*(*h*). And *Gregory Thaumaturgus* expreſſes it in a like manner, according to the Tranſlation in the notes upon *Nicephorus*; *diſtinguiter inſeparabiliter*; and *coagmentatur inſeparabiliter*(*i*). But theſe anſwers gave but little Satisfaction to the *Arians*.—

I obſerved of *Euſebius*, that he ſays; the Word was always with the Father, *as a Son*; even before he was begotten: If this were certain, the difficulty juſt mentioned would be ſufficiently obviated; as there would be no ne-

(*f*) Corpus quid ſit, Sanguis quid ſit, intelligo: *quaſi* Corpus & *quaſi* Sanguis quid ſit, nullo modo intelligo. *Cic.* de Nat. Deor. I. 1. (*g*) Neſcio quæ in iſtis animadvertitur, quæ neque *explicari verbis, nec mente comprehendi poteſt, Communio pariter & Diſjunctio.* (*h*) *Euag.* B. V. c. 4. (*i*) *Niceph.* lib. I. c. 2. note.

ceſſity

ceſſity of going forth from the Father, to become a Son: for if the Father was Father, before he begat; the Son muſt be a Son, before he was begotten.—But here we meet with another objection from *Eunomius*; that if the Son exiſted, *as a Son*, before he was begotten; he was *unbegotten*: and conſequently *unoriginate*: And, if ſo, he could not receive his origin from the Father; nor be an *Offſpring*, or a *Son*, or a *Production* from the eternal mind. And this objection drives us back again into the opinion of Dr. *Waterland*; that the generation of the Son was merely a *Coexiſtence*(*k*). But this has been already exploded; becauſe it ſuppoſes two unoriginate or ſelf-exiſtent Beings; and conſequently two Gods: for one Being cannot exiſt with itſelf but with another; as *Athanaſius* juſtly obſerves. And *Juſtin Martyr* ſays, the Son is ἕτερος ἀριθμῷ, *alter numero*, and conſequently not unoriginate. And therefore, either *Euſebius* was miſtaken; in ſuppoſing the Word to be a *Son*, *before* he was *begotten*; and the Emperor *Conſtantine* in ſuppoſing that God was *always* Father; even before he had begotten a Son; or elſe Biſhop *Bull* and the Fathers he eſpouſes were miſtaken; in ſuppoſing his *Generation* to be that *Production*, *quâ ἐγεννήθη* by which he received his Exiſtence. But if it is allowed, that *Generation*, whatever be the meaning of it, is

(*k*) P. 1076. of this Chapter.

neceſ-

neceſſary to the being of a Son; then *Euſebius's opinion* (that he exiſted before he was begotten) muſt be falſe: and the Biſhop's opinion muſt be ſo far true; viz. that his Generation was a *Production*; and by this Production he received his Origin; and not only became a Son, but *began to be*; as *Au'ſtin* and *Damaſcen* aſſert(*l*).—I ſhall conclude this Chapter with the words of Dr. *Whitby*, which I think muſt appear undeniably true to any one that reads them. "This only "I inſiſt on, ſays the Doctor, that the Contro- "verſies concerning the holy Trinity, diſputed "with the greateſt Acrimony and Contention "on both Sides, [and particularly the Subject "of this Chapter] cannot be certainly deter- "mined by the writings of the Fathers, the "decrees of Councils, or plain doctrines of "Univerſal Tradition: nor is any thing to be "believed or ſafely aſſerted; but what can be "proved plainly and clearly from the holy "Scriptures(*m*)."—Whereas in conſulting the Opinions of the Fathers, we meet with nothing but Darkneſs, Contradiction, and Confuſion; like the deſcription which *Ovid* has given us of the Chaos—

"Obſtabatque aliis aliud; quia Corpore in uno
"Frigida pugnabant calidis, humentia ſiccis,
"Molſia cum duris, ſine pondere habentia pondus."

(*l*) Cum *Tryph.* 380.—*Whitby*, 86. (*m*) *Whitby* Diſ. Mod. Præf. p. 111.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Senſe of the word Production, and whether the Generation of the Son was a literal Generation.

HAVING in the laſt Chapter examined and compared the different opinions of the learned Chriſtians relative to the antemundane generation of the Son of God; I ſhall venture to reject the notion of Dr. *Waterland*, that it was merely a *Coexiſtence*; as being already fully anſwered: and go-on to conſider the opinion of Biſhop *Bull* and the Fathers he eſpouſes; that it was a *Production*.—And examine firſt, whether this *Production* was a *proper* and *literal*, or only a *figurative Generation*.

The word *Production* may be underſtood in two different Senſes. A thing may either be produced from nothing; that is, *created*; in which ſenſe the generation of the Son was underſtood by *Arius*: or it may be produced from ſomething præexiſtent, as the *Platoniſts* believed their inferior Gods to be created or *produced* out of the præexiſtent *Pſyche*(*a*). And in this latter ſenſe Biſhop *Bull*, Biſhop *Pearſon*, and the *Nicene* Fathers underſtood that Chriſt

(*a*) Let. I. p. 158.

was

was produced *out of the eternal Eſſence* of the Father; *ex propria Dei Subſtantia.* And inſtead of always uſing the word *Production* they explain themſelves ſometimes by other words; which are not liable to the ſame uncertainty. Biſhop *Bull* ſpeaks alſo, with other learned men, of *internal* Production; which I ſhall take notice of elſewhere.

Biſhop *Pearſon* ſays; "the *Communication of* "*the divine Eſſence* by the Father, is the *true* "and *proper Generation*; by which he hath *be-* "*gotten* a Son. A Son is nothing but *another,* "*produced* by his Father; of the *ſame* Nature "with him: but God the Father hath *commu-* "*nicated* to the Word the *ſame* divine Eſſence, "by which he is God(*b*)." And again, "the "Father hath the *ſame Attributes and Eſſence* of "*himſelf*; and the Son, by *Communication* from "the Father(*c*)." (Is the Son then unoriginate, "unbegotten, and ſelf-exiſtent; as the Father "is?) And Biſhop *Bull* ſays; what elſe does it "mean to be *generated*; but to be *born from* "*another* into a *Similitude* of *Nature?* Where- "fore it is neceſſary that he who is begotten "ſhould have *that Nature* by communication "from him; that in it he may *reſemble* the *Be-* "*getter* (*d*)?" [If he *reſembles* him in Eſſence, how

(*b*) *Pearſon,* 137. (*c*) *Ibid.*

(*d*) Quid eſt aliud *generari* quam *naſci* ex altero in Similitudinem Naturæ; quare neceſſe eſt Naturam ab illa

how can he be the *ſame* Eſſence: and if the *ſame* Eſſence, how can he be *another?*]

Now if theſe definitions of a Son, and his generation from the Father's Subſtance, be juſt and preciſe; it ſeems to follow, that the Holy Ghoſt is the *Son* of God; as well as the *Logos:* for both the Son and the Holy Ghoſt are ſuppoſed to proceed from the Father, by *Communication of Eſſence*; which, we are told, is the *true* and *proper* Generation. And Biſhop *Pearſon*, to make good his Hypotheſis quotes the following words of our Saviour; I proceeded and came forth from God: neither came I of myſelf, but my Father ſent me (*e*); and argues, that this *proceſſion* of the Son is mean'd *by way of Generation:* and afterwards the Biſhop quotes theſe other words of Chriſt; when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend you from the Father; he ſhall teſtify of me (*f*): and He interprets theſe words, in the ſame arbitrary manner, to relate to the *Proceſſion* of the Holy Ghoſt from the Father's Subſtance (*g*). And from hence I argue; that, if Generation be nothing more than *Communication of Subſtance*, according to theſe definitions, and the Biſhop's

Communicatione habeat ille qui gignitur, ut ea gignenti ſit ſimilis. *Bull*, p. 255. But ſurely no man ever thought that *Generari* and *Naſci* had the ſame ſenſe.

(*e*) *John* viii. 42. (*f*) *John* xv. 26. (*g*) *Pearſon* p. 323.

inter-

interpretation of theſe Texts; the *proceſſion* of the Holy Ghoſt muſt be as much a *generation*, as the *proceſſion* of the Son.

I call theſe interpretations arbitrary; becauſe there is no good reaſon to think, that theſe texts relate to the *origination* either of Son or Spirit; but merely to their *Miſſion*, or being ſent forth by God upon the Goſpel diſpenſation; and there is not one of the Texts which the Biſhop refers to in this argument, (viz. becauſe they were *ſent*, becauſe the Holy Ghoſt is called the Spirit of *God*, and the Spirit of *Chriſt*, which was in the Prophets;) which relates at all to their antemundane *Generation*. The right of Miſſion, from which he argues, has nothing to do with Communication of Eſſence—and the proceeding from God, as ſent upon a miniſterial office, is very different from a Proceſſion *out of his Subſtance*. An Ambaſſador is *ſent* by a Prince, and receives of him what to ſay; but he does not therefore receive his *Eſſence* from the Prince's *Subſtance:* in ſhort, the Biſhop has not in theſe pages a ſingle Text to ſupport him. And when he endeavours to prove, that the Holy Ghoſt is not a Son; becauſe he receiveth and glorifies the Son—and that his coming depended upon the departure of the Son—his arguments only amount to a proof, that the Holy Ghoſt is not the *ſame* Son: but it is impoſſible to prove, that he is not a *Son*; as well as the

Logos; as long as it is admitted, that *Generation* ſignifies only *Communication of Subſtance*; and that the Holy Ghoſt received *Communication of Subſtance*, as well as the *Logos*.

To this objection the Biſhop finds himſelf unable to anſwer, without giving up his definition; and ſuppoſing the Sonſhip of the *Logos* to depend, not upon the *Communication* of the divine Eſſence, but the *Manner* of it; "the "Word being God by *Generation*, and the "Holy Ghoſt by *Proceſſion*(*b*)." So that he firſt lays it down, that *Communication* of Subſtance or Eſſence is the *true* and *proper* Generation, by which the Father hath begotten a Son; and then ſays, in direct contradiction to it; that a perſon *ſo generated* may be *no* Son; becauſe the Communication is not made by *Generation*, but *Proceſſion*.—Let us ſee, in what manner he explains this difference; and endeavours to ſhew, that the Generation he ſpeaks of, is not *merely a Communication* of Subſtance. "*Eve*, he ſays, was produced out of *Adam* in "the *ſame Nature* with him, and yet was *not* "born of him; nor was ſhe truly the daughter "of *Adam*: whereas *Seth*, proceeding from the "*ſame Perſon* in ſimilitude of the *ſame Nature*, "*was truly and properly the Son of Adam*. And "this difference, he ſays, was not in the *Na*"*ture* produced; but in the *Manner* of pro-

(*b*) *Pearſon*, 241.

"duction;

" duction; *Eve* deſcending not from *Adam* as " *Seth* did, by way of *Generation*; i. e. natural " fecundity(*i*)."

The plain truth, which the biſhop does not chooſe to give us in this place, is this: that in one caſe, there was an *act* of Generation between *male* and *female*; which is *abſolutely neceſſary*, according to all language, to the *exiſtence* of a *Son* or a *Daughter*; and in the other caſe, there was no ſuch *act*: and conſequently, no *Son* or *Daughter* was produced—and in this *literal* ſenſe of Generation the Biſhop fully explains himſelf, when he is ſpeaking of the generation of the Son by the Holy Ghoſt of the virgin *Mary*; and ſays, " If the Ancients " ſpeak thus, it is not to be underſtood as if " the Spirit did perform any *proper act* of gene- " ration; ſuch as is the *foundation* of Pater- " nity." Here it appears; that, in the Biſhop's opinion, in order to become a *Father*, ſome *proper act* of Generation muſt be performed; ſuch as is the *foundation* of Paternity: to which groſs intimation it is ſufficient to anſwer; that, if we have any idea at all to our words; there can be no *ſuch generation* poſſible; with regard to the preſent queſtion. For Generation, properly ſo called, including an act of Paternity, is very *different* from a *mere Production*; and ſuppoſes the *Society* of *male* and *female*: but

(*i*) *Ibid.* 166.

with

with regard to the Generation of the *Son*, there can be no room for any ſuch ſuppoſition; and conſequently, the *literal* Generation of the Son is *impoſſible*: and the difference in the *manner* of communicating the divine Eſſence to the Son by *generation*: and to the Holy Ghoſt by *proceſſion*, entirely excluded. And, in like manner, all the compariſons and alluſions which are uſed by the *Athanaſians*, as of a tree derived from its root, a river from its fountain, a light from the Sun, extend no farther than to explain that the Son of God may be a *derivation* or *production* (in which ſenſe Biſhop *Bull* explains *Generation* and *Nativity* as having the ſame meaning): but theſe compariſons by no means relate to him as a *literal Son*, by ſuch a *proper act* of Generation as is the *foundation* of Paternity, and diſtinguiſhes the Origination of the Son from that of the Holy Ghoſt: which indeed is an Idea too groſs to be indulged. And yet, if Chriſt be not a Son in that *ſtrict* and *groſs* ſenſe—the word *Son of God*, when applied to the *Logos*, cannot poſſibly be mean'd in a *literal* but in a *figurative* ſenſe; either as the word may mean merely to expreſs *Production* or *Origination*, as it is uſed by *Tertullian* and *Athanaſius*, quoted in the beginning of the ſeventh Chapter: or as it means a *deſignation* to a particular Office; as the word κτισις in *Prov.* viii. 22. is explained by *Euſebius*.—The author of

of the *Recognitions* denies, that the Holy Ghoſt may be called a Son; becauſe, he ſays, there is but one *ungenerated*; and but one *generated:* the Holy Ghoſt being made by One who was alſo made(*k*). But this reaſon, if it were true, would prove; that the *Logos* was no more a *literal Son*, than the *Holy Ghoſt*; for, as it is obſerved by *Euſebius* of *Nicomedia* in his Letter to *Paulinus* Biſhop of *Tyre*, *what* is *made* cannot be of the divine Subſtance, which is *ſelf-exiſtent*; but muſt be created(*l*).

CHAPTER IX.

Whether the Son of God was a Production from the Father's Subſtance; and whether his Generation was effected by a Communication of the Paternal Subſtance; and whether the divine Subſtance be ſteril or prolific.

HAVING in the laſt Chapter ſhewn the abſurdity of ſuppoſing Chriſt to be the Son of God by ſuch a *proper Generation*, as is the *foundation* of Paternity; I ſhall now conſider the opinion, which is neareſt to it in a literal ſenſe; viz. whether he was a *Production out of the Father's Subſtance*, according to the ſimilitudes in which it is repreſented by the *Athanaſians*; as a

(*k*) Lib. III. c. ii. (*l*) *Niceph.* lib. viii. c. x.

tree

tree from its root, a river from its fountain, &c. none of which extend to any *act of Paternity*, but merely to a *Production*.

Biſhop *Pearſon* ſays; a Son is nothing, but another *produced* by his Father, of the *ſame* Nature with him: and that God has *communicated* to the Son the ſame divine *Eſſence*, by which he is God. And Biſhop *Bull* ſays, from *Petavius*; that a *Generation* cannot be conceived, without a *Communication* of ſomething; and that Communication can only be of *Nature*, *Eſſence*, or *Subſtance*; becauſe it is a *Subſtantial Production*(*a*). To this it is anſwered; that a Generation of the divine Subſtance is impoſſible: becauſe the ſame [thing or] Subſtance cannot beget (or produce or be communicated to) itſelf(*b*). Wherefore as the *Eſſence* of the three Perſons is allowed to be *the ſame*; the *Eſſence* cannot beget the *Eſſence:* to which argument Biſhop *Bull* oppoſes the words of *Melanchon*; that the ſame, as far as it is *incommunicable*, does not *beget itſelf*; but the *ſame* that is *communicable* is communicable to the begotten: but *Eſſence is communicable*; and therefore is communicable to the begotten.

(*a*) Neque enim generatio ſine alicujus rei Communicatione poteſt animo concipi: porro non alterius quam Naturæ, Eſſentiæ, & Subſtantiæ: cum ſit οὐσιώδης, id eſt, ſubſtantialis productio. *Bulli* op. 255.

(*b*) Idem ipſum non gignit; quare cum Eſſentia ſit eadem, non poteſt Eſſentia gignere Eſſentiam. *Ibid.* 256.

Now

Now it is allowed; that *Eſſence*, that is, all *finite* Eſſence is communicable; either in whole or in part: though it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, it can beget or produce itſelf; whether it be communicable or not. But the divine Eſſence is communicable *neither way*. An *individual* Eſſence, ſays Dr. *Whitby*, *cannot* be communicated; for that very reaſon, becauſe it is *individual*; that is, *one* and *no more:* but ſuppoſing there is any thing in the divine Nature *capable* of being communicated, (which is abſurd to imagine for another reaſon alſo, viz. becauſe it is *unchangeable*;) I would then aſk, to *whom* or to *what* could the Communication be made; when as yet *nothing* but the divine Eſſence *exiſted?* For, "until the generation of "the Son of God, God was *alone*; being to "himſelf both world and place and all things: "*So alone*, that there was nothing external to "him;" ſays *Tertullian*(c). The divine Nature therefore could not be communicated to any *other* Being, or *ſecond* Perſon; becauſe *no other Being* or Perſon exiſted, except the God and Father of the univerſe; and a communication of his own Subſtance to himſelf could not be poſſible.

This ſeems to have been the reaſon, which drove the Council of *Nice* to maintain; that the Son of God exiſted, as the Attribute of

(c) *Tertul.* adv. *Prax.* c. 5.

Wiſdom, *before* he was begotten; or *before* the communication of Eſſence was made: that there might be ſomething *præexiſting* to which it might be communicated. And accordingly, *Athanaſius* declares; that, whoever aſſerts the *Son was not before he was begotten*, contradicts the Synod(*d*). So that, according to this Syſtem, the generation of the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity was effected by the Communication of the *divine Subſtance* to the *divine Attribute* of Wiſdom. But this could not really be the caſe: becauſe the Subſtance and Attributes of God being always united, the communication of one to the other could be nothing more, than the continuation of the ſame Union; every thing remaining as it did always: ſo that if there was but one Perſon exiſting before the ſuppoſed communication, there would be but one Perſon after it: and the continuance of every thing as it was before, will no more produce one more Perſon; than it will produce a *thouſand*.

In ſhort, whatever belongs to the ſelf-exiſtent Being, whether Subſtance or Attribute, is *ſelf-exiſtent*; being indeed God himſelf under a particular conſideration; as Dr. *Whitby* has obſerved(*e*): and conſequently, never was produced at all. So that the queſtion to be diſ-

(*d*) Epiſt. concerning the *Nicene* Council.—*Cudworth*, 608.

(*e*) Laſt Thoughts, 19—22.

cuſſed,

cuſſed, as far as the generation of the *divine* Eſſence is concerned, is not ſimply whether *Eſſence* can beget *Eſſence*, or *Wiſdom Wiſdom?* which ſeems to have been the diſpute between *Peter Lombard* the Maſter of the Sentences, and *Richard Victorinus*; but, whether the *ſame Eſſence* which is *ſelf-exiſtent*, and conſequently never was generated or produced, *did beget* or *generate itſelf?* which does not ſeem to be very probable. And moreover, if it were poſſible to produce itſelf, it would not thereby produce a *ſecond* perſon diſtinct and different from the firſt; but the very *ſame* numerical Subſtance, which exiſted before ſuch a ſuppoſed generation.

But Biſhop *Pearſon* ſays, we muſt not look upon the divine Nature as *ſteril*; but rather admire the *fecundity* and communicability of itſelf, upon which the creation of the world dependeth(*f*). Here the Biſhop's notion of *fecundity* ſeems to be nothing more than the *power* of creating. Let us obſerve how he goes on: "but the divine Eſſence being, by reaſon "of its *Simplicity*, not ſubject to *Diviſion*; and "in reſpect of its *Infinity*, incapable of *Multi-* "*plication*; is ſo communicated, as not to be "multiplied(*g*)." Is not this plainly to confeſs, that there can be *no fecundity* in the divine Nature?—The Biſhop goes-on to prove it: "inſomuch that he, who proceedeth by Com-

(*f*) *Pearſon*, 135. (*g*) *Ibid.* 138.

"munication of the divine Subſtance, hath "not only the *ſame* Nature; but is alſo the "*ſame* God(*b*)."—Now if there was from Eternity *One* Eſſence: and that One Eſſence continues *unchangeably the ſame* One, without any *numerical* increaſe of Eſſence; where is the *fecundity* of the divine Eſſence? certainly there is no ſuch thing. On the contrary, the divine Eſſence, having received no *numerical* increaſe, muſt be ſteril: But if the Chriſtian Divines are *reſolved* to maintain a Fecundity in God, it ſhould not be ſuppoſed to be *by generation of Subſtance*; (which they allow to have been always *one*, without any increaſe;) but *by generation of Perſons*; for then they would have this appearance of Probability at leaſt, that there was only One Perſon in the Godhead at the firſt; which was afterwards increaſed to *Three*. Whereas a Fecundity without an increaſe in number or quantity, is abſolute nonſenſe.—But then the difficulty would lie here—

1ſt. If we underſtand the word *Perſon*, as we uſually do in common diſcourſe, when we ſpeak of three diſtinct Perſons; as it was underſtood by Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*, and the Realiſts; it unavoidably follows, that if each of theſe be *infinite*, they muſt be Three diſtinct *Gods*; and the generation of the *Son* muſt be the generation of a *Second God*.

(*b*) *Ibid.* 137.

2. If

2. If we ſuppoſe the Son to be generated by the Communication of that ſelf-exiſtent Subſtance, which was *eſſential to* and *inſeparable from* the *Perſon* of the Father: we muſt ſuppoſe the divine fecundity to conſiſt in the communication of the Father's *Perſon*, as well as of his *Subſtance*. So that, to ſpeak nearly, in Biſhop *Pearſon*'s own words; he, who proceedeth by Communication of the divine Subſtance; muſt not only be the *ſame God*, but the *ſame Perſon* as the Father: and conſequently, the Fecundity will be only imaginary; as there will be no increaſe either in Subſtance or Perſon.

On the other hand, if we underſtand the word *Perſons*, as Biſhop *Burnet* and the Nominals do(*i*), not to mean diſtinct Subſtances, but only *Characters* or *Properties* of the one ſelf-exiſtent Subſtance, as explained by *Au'ſtin* and the Reformed Churches; the divine Fecundity is entirely out of the Queſtion. For neither can the *reflect act of the divine Underſtanding* or *Intellect* be called with any propriety a *Generation*, and much leſs a *Subſtantial* Generation, by which they ſuppoſe the Son to be produced; nor can that *Love* ſuppoſed to be produced by Intellect and Wiſdom, and to become the *Holy Ghoſt*, be ſaid with any Propriety to be a ſubſtantial Production(*k*). For one and the ſame ſubſtance may appear under the Characters of

(*i*) Lett. I. p. 67. (*k*) *Ibid.* I. p. 215.

Mind,

Mind, Wiſdom, and Love; or of Creator, Redeemer, and Benefactor; or of Light, Counſel, and Life; or of Bounty, Immutability, and Unity; or of Goodneſs, Knowledge, and Power; or of Life, Underſtanding, and Will; or of all theſe together; without any *Generation* or *Fecundity* at all(*l*). But not one of theſe can ſuffer Pain and Death; without the ſuffering of the Subſtance, in which the particular Property exiſts; and by which it is ſupported.

The conſidering the *Creation of the Univerſe*, as that which proves the divine Subſtance to be prolific and to be a natural Fecundity; and then palming it upon us as a Generation *out of the divine Subſtance*; is a piece of ſophiſtry, unworthy of Biſhop *Pearſon:* but he was betrayed into it by *Athanaſius*, who argues thus; If the divine Eſſence be not fruitful, but barren;—as light not enlightening, and a ſpring that is dry; how is it that they are not aſhamed to ſay, that he has a *creative* Power?—as if Creation from nothing, which was the caſe of the Univerſe; was the ſame thing as a generation from the divine Subſtance.

In ſhort, it is to no purpoſe for the Chriſtians to tell us of the divine Fecundity, as to Subſtance; unleſs they allow of a *numerical increaſe* in the divine Subſtance: which they dare not do: but they go as far as they dare; and much

(*l*) Let. I. p. 202.

too

too far, when they ſpeak of God as not being *One in Number*, and as making a Society. When *Gilbert Porretane*, the learned Biſhop of *Poictiers*, had aſſerted, that the three perſons were *tria ſingularia*; the Archbiſhop of *Nevers* objected, that God ſhould rather be called *unum ſingulare*, than *tria ſingularia* (*m*): at which many were offended; becauſe *Hilary* ſaith, "As it is *profane* "to ſay, there are two Gods; ſo it is alſo *im-* "*pious* to ſay, that he is ſingular or ſolitary. "[Singularem & ſolitarium dicere ſacrilegum "eſt.]"—And Mr. *How*, in the diſputes upon the Trinity in the laſt age has carried this notion farther. He ſays, "the Perſons are diſ- "tinct numerical Natures, Beings, and Sub- "ſtances; that there is a variety of individual "Natures in the Deity; that there are in the "Godhead, three diſtinct intelligent Hypoſta- "ſes, having each his own diſtinct, ſingular, "intelligent Nature; and theſe three divine "Perſons, Beings, Eſſences, Natures, Subſtan- "ces, maintain a *delicious Society*. No Enjoy- "ments being pleaſant without Conſociation "therein. And we muſt needs think this a "more bleſſed ſtate, or a more perfect Idea of "Bleſſedneſs; than can be conceived in an "eternal Solitude(*n*)."

(*m*) *Baxter*'s Ch. Hiſt. p. 383.—Let. VII. p. 867.
(*n*) Unit. Tracts, Vol. III. p. 40.

I ſhall

I ſhall not enter into this Subject: I am only proving, that God is not *prolific*; as to his *Subſtance*. And this will appear beyond all doubt; when we have conſidered the only ways, in which ſuch a fecundity can be conceived; and by which the learned Chriſtians in ſupport of their philoſophical notions have ſuppoſed it to be effected.

Tertullian, the firſt of the Latin Fathers, underſtood the *Word* to be a *part* of God; and that God *made* the Son, by bringing him forth *out of himſelf* (*o*): and that the Father is the *whole* Subſtance, and the Son a *portion* or *derivation* of or from the whole(*p*). And ſo *Manichæus* ſays, that the Son was a conſubſtantial *part* of the Father(*q*). And, if this could be, it would *make* a Second Perſon, though *not* of the *ſame numerical* Subſtance, yet of the ſame *kind*, as the rib of *Adam* made an *Eve*. But this is ſaid to be the Hereſy of the *Montaniſts*; and is *inconſiſtent* with the *Indiviſibility* of the divine Eſſence. And the opinion of *Valentius* and others, that the Son is an *Emiſſion* or *Emanation* of the Father; is liable to the ſame Objection. For if they ſuppoſe an Emanation, that *divides* the indiviſible Eſſence; it is a contradiction in terms: and to ſuppoſe an Emanation

(*o*) *Ex ſcipſo proferendo filium fecit.* lii. con. *Marcion.* c. 27. (*p*) Adv. *Prax.* c. ix. (*q*) *Eundem illum fætum eſſe dixit conſubſtantialem.* Epiſt. *Arii* ad *Alexan.*

that

that does *not divide*, is to ſuppoſe no Emanation at all. But we are told by *Zanchius*; that this objection is made from our not perceiving how any thing can be *generated from* another, and be his Son; ſo as to remain *in* him by whom he is generated: for, ſays he, they think all generation is made *ab extra*, and none *ab intra*. And ſo the Generation, that Biſhop *Bull* defends, is not an *external* Production; but an *internal* one(*r*). But this only brings us into more confuſion: for an *internal* Production *without a Separation*, will not be *another* produced; (according to Biſhop *Pearſon*'s definition of a Son) but it will be the *ſame*: that is, it will be *no Production* at all. Thus *Petavius* ſpeaks the opinion of the Fathers, when he ſays, the *Word* was *incloſed (inſitum & incluſum)* in the bowels of God, before it was begotten; and therefore *not yet called a Son*, but was the *ſame as the Father*. And *Irenæus* fully confutes this unintelligible notion, as follows; "If they ſay of the Son, "that he was *not emitted* out of the Father; but "was *in* the Father himſelf: Firſt, it is ſuper-"fluous or to no purpoſe even to ſay, that he "was *emitted*: for *how* was he *emitted*, if he "continued in the Father? for an Emiſſion is "the *external Manifeſtation* of that which is

(*r*) *Bulli* op. 284. and he ſays, p. 100. *Tanquam ex utero exivit* καὶ' ἐνέργειαν.

"emitted *out of* the emittent(*s*)." And it was the general doctrine of the *Anti-nicenes*; that the Son was *always* in the Father *ab æterno*, as his Wiſdom unbegotten and unſubſtantial; becauſe God is *always rational* and *wiſe*: but that he was *ſubſtantially begotten*, and became *another*, by coming *forth* from the Father; *proſiliens & progrediens* (*t*): but how could this be, without a Separation?

On the other hand, Biſhop *Pearſon* conſiders the Generation of the Son, not as a *partial Emanation*, but as a *total* and *plenary Communication* of the divine Subſtance (*u*); as indeed it muſt be, if it be any Communication of Subſtance at all. For an individual Subſtance cannot be communicated partially; but either wholly or elſe not communicated—and to *communicate* the whole divine Subſtance, is to *part* with it; and ſo Almighty God muſt be ſuppoſed to have communicated Himſelf, in order to produce a ſecond Perſon: but this would not be the conſequence; even with finite Beings. A total Communication of Subſtance in a finite Being, would be merely a change of place; without any new production or generation.

(*s*) *Si autem non emiſſum extra Patrem illum dicent, ſed in ipſo Patre; primo quidem ſuperfluum erit etiam dicere emiſſum eſſe eum: Quemadmodum enim emiſſus eſt, ſi intra Patrem erat? Emiſſio enim eſt ejus quod emittitur extra emittentem Manifeſtatio.* Lib. II. c. 17.

(*t*) *Whitby* Dif. Mod. 167. (*u*) *Pearſon*, 137, 138.

But

But the Supreme Being is incapable of any ſuch Communication; becauſe he is infinite, and fills all ſpace. Beſides, the Communication of the whole divine Eſſence includes a Communication of the divine attributes, which are eſſential to it, and inſeparable from it (*x*); and if both are communicated, the *Perſonality* muſt be communicated; and the Father and Son will not only be one and the ſame *Subſtance*, but one and the ſame *Perſon*: which is *Sabellianiſm*. Beſides, if the whole Subſtance was communicated to the Son, how could he be ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Θεοῦ; *out of the Subſtance* of God? according to this notion, he muſt be the *very* Subſtance itſelf, and the whole Subſtance; and the Son muſt be the *Father himſelf*; or in other words, as *Athanaſius* obſerves of *Sabellianiſm*, this notion deſtroys the very Eſſence of the Son; and falls in with the doctrines of the *Monöouſians* and *Tautöouſians* (*y*).

I propoſed, before I ended this chapter, to conſider the ſtrange opinion, which ſome learned Chriſtians have maintained; in order to prove the divine *Fecundity*; to wit, that God is not *One in Number*; but only in *Nature*, or Subſtance. For it is the divine Nature [Subſtance or Godhead] that is *not ſteril*, ſays Biſhop

(*x*) Biſhop *Pearſon* ſays, the divine Perfections and Attributes are the ſame with the divine Eſſence. p. 127.

(*y*) See page 168.

Pearſon (z); and Dr. *Allix* agrees, that God is *unus* and not *unicus*; *One* God, but not the *Only* God. And he quotes *Philo* with approbation; "that the Unity of God is of ſo tranſcendental "a nature, as to have nothing in common with "other Beings who fall under number. And "theſe, he ſays, are the ſteps which we take to "ſhew that an eternal Generation in the divine "Nature is no Contradiction(*a*)." But how God can be more than One in *Nature*, unleſs there be *more than One God*; or how there can be more than One God, conſiſtently with the declarations of *Moſes*, that *Jehovah* is *one* (*b*); and with the declarations of the New Teſtament, that God is *one*; ὁ Θεὸς εἷς ἐστι(*c*), is not eaſy to make-out. And to ſay that God is *One* in ſo tranſcendental a manner, as to be *no more* than One; is to talk unintelligibly; and muſt lead us on the one ſide into Atheiſm, and on the other into Polytheiſm(*d*).

That we are hereby led into Atheiſm, has been long ago proved by *Tertullian* in theſe words; "If God is not *One*, he is *not*: there-"fore God is the *only* God: nor otherwiſe the "only God, but as being *ſupremely great*: nor "otherwiſe ſupremely great, but as *having no* "*equal*: nor otherwiſe without equal, but as

(z) Let. I. p. 168.—Let. VII. p. 867 (*a*) *Pearſon*, p. 135. (*b*) *Allix* Jewiſh Ch. 121, 268. (*c*) *James* ii. 19. (*d*) *Emlyn*'s Tracts, Vol. I. 166.

"being

" being the *only God*. *Two* therefore ſupremely " great are inconſiſtent; becauſe the *ſupreme* " *greatneſs* conſiſts in *having no equal*: but to " have no equal can only be the property of " One; and cannot poſſibly agree to *Two*(*e*)." And ſo *Euſebius* ſpeaks; " there is only One " God; namely He who is without beginning " and unbegotten: and the cauſe why the Son " is as he is—nor do we declare the two ſub- " ſtances to be equal in honour, nor both to be " without beginning and unbegotten(*f*)."

In ſhort, if the Son be generated from the Subſtance of the Father, ſo as to continue the *ſame one* Subſtance; it muſt follow that God is *not prolific* in Subſtance: and on the other hand, if the Son be ſo generated from the Father's Subſtance, as to be *another* of the *ſame* Subſtance with him, agreeably to the Biſhop's definition; and God be thereby more than One in number; there will be more than One God. And this doctrine, if held in the beginning of Chriſtianity, would have overturned all the arguments of the Chriſtians againſt the Heathens: as it would have been an unanſwerable reply in the defenders of Polytheiſm, that the many Gods they worſhipped were formed out of the Subſtance of the Supreme *Demiurgus*, and were conſubſtantial with him: and conſequently,

(*e*) Contra *Marcel.* lib. i. c. 3. (*f*) *Whitby* Diſq. mod. p. 8. See what follows from *Irenæus*.

though

though many in number, they were all one and the ſame in Nature.

CHAPTER X.

The reaſoning of Baſil *examined.*

THE *Athanaſians* at the *Nicene* Council believed each of the three Perſons in the Trinity to ſubſiſt of itſelf; that is, to be a perfect Subſtance: and that theſe three Subſtances were united inſeparably by a *Perichoreſis*; which prevented them from being three Gods: and this was the Catholic Faith, according to Biſhop *Bull*(*a*).——On the contrary, the *Sabellians* believed; that God was not three Subſtances united: but only one Subſtance, both before the generation and afterwards. And they argued againſt the *Atha-*

(*a*) The words of *Baſil* are thus tranſlated in Biſhop *Bull*, p. 32. from *Baſil*, tom. III. p. 292. Dixerunt enim illi *homöouſii* vocem, notionem Subſtantiæ, et eorum quæ ex ipſa ſunt, repræſentare nobis: ita ut Subſtantia diſtributa (καλαμιρισθεῖσα) *homöouſii* appellationem impertiat iis in quæ diſtributa fuerit (διηρέθη). Hoc quidem veriſſimum eſt de ære, & numiſmatibus inde cuſis: at in Deo Patre & in Deo Filio nec Subſtantia eſt anterior, nec utrique videtur ſuperſtrata: (ὑπερκεῖσθαι·) hoc enim dicere vel cogitare, impietatis omnem rationem excedit.

See the Council of *Conſtantinople*. *Niceph.* Vol. II. p. 262, and 245.

naſian

naſian notion of the *homöouſion*, as follows— That, as God was originally ἓν πρᾶγμα, one Subſtance, or Thing; he muſt always continue ſo: for as much as there could not be a Production of two or more Subſtances from the ἓν πρᾶγμα, without a diviſion of the divine Eſſence; and a diviſion implied a contradiction to the divine ἀφθάρσια, or incorruptibility; and was therefore impoſſible.

The great *Baſil* endeavours to remove this Objection: and ſays, they objected to the word *homöouſios*; 1ſt. as if it repreſented a notion of Subſtance and its properties; 2. as if the Subſtance being diſtributed gave the name of Conſubſtantial to the things into which it was diſtributed; this, he ſays, is true of Braſs, and the Coins that are made of it; but 3dly, in God the Father and God the Son neither is the Subſtance anterior, nor 4thly, is it ſuperſtrated; and 5thly, to ſay or think ſuch a thing is impious.

It will be a ſufficient reply to all this, to aſk a few plain queſtions. And

1ſt. The great *Baſil* complains, that the word *homöouſios* is objected-to by the *Sabellians*; as if it repreſented the notion of *Subſtance* and its *properties*. But what elſe can it repreſent; and preſerve any meaning? Does not the word *homöouſios* ſignify, *of the ſame Subſtance?* And can we have any meaning to the word, without

out an idea of Subſtance, (how imperfect ſoever it may be;) or any idea of the *ſame* Subſtance, or of *communicating* Subſtance; without the ideas both of *Identity* and *Communication*?—But, in truth, the argument againſt the *homöouſians* is equally concluſive; whether it be uſed of *Subſtance* or any thing elſe. If two proceed from One, that One muſt be divided; and, if the One be indiviſible, (which all Chriſtians agree to be the nature of the divine Subſtance) then two cannot proceed from it. And this muſt be univerſally true of every thing that exiſts, or can exiſt even in idea.

2dly. He ſays, they objected to the word; as if *Subſtance* being *diſtributed* gave the name of *conſubſtantial* to thoſe things into which it is diſtributed. But I anſwer; are not the Son and Holy Ghoſt ſaid to be conſubſtantial with the Father; becauſe the divine Subſtance is *communicated* to them? and what do we mean by *Communication* of Subſtance, if not *diſtribution* of Subſtance?

3dly. *Baſil* ſays; though it be true of Braſs and Coins, that the Subſtance being diſtributed gives the name of Conſubſtantial to the Coin; yet in God the Father and God the Son the *Subſtance is not anterior*.—Can the great *Baſil* mean, that the divine *Subſtance* of the Father did not exiſt *prior* to the *Generation* of the Son; by which he became conſubſtantial with the Father?

Father? If this were the Caſe; how could the great *Athanaſius* ſay, that the Son exiſted *before* his generation; τὸν ὕλα πρότερον, ὕστερον γινηθέντα ἐκ ὑιον. Did the Son exiſt *before the divine Subſtance*, from which he was generated? Certainly not. And yet if the ὕστερον *afterwards*, when he was generated into a Son, was *coeternal* with the divine Subſtance; (i. e. if the divine Subſtance was not anterior to the Communication of it) and the Son exiſted πρότερον, *before* that generation; as *Athanaſius* and the *Nicene* Council aſſert: he muſt have exiſted *before the divine Subſtance*; which is impoſſible.

4thly. *Baſil* ſays, the divine *Subſtance* was *not ſuperſtrated* upon each of them. Certainly on the Father it was not; becauſe he is unoriginate. But the Son received his Exiſtence as a Second Subſtantial Perſon, ὑποστάλος, by *Communication* of the divine Subſtance; and where is the difference between the words *communicata, diſtributa, & ſuperſtrata?* And if he was *partaker* of the divine nature or Subſtance, *without* or *prior to* this *Communication*; his *generation* does not conſiſt in the *Communication of Eſſence*; as Biſhop *Bull*, Biſhop *Pearſon*, &c. would perſuade us.

Laſtly, *Baſil* ſays; it is impious to ſuppoſe *ſuch a diſtribution* of Subſtance, when ſpeaking of the Father and the Son.—And this is what the *Anti-homöouſians* alſo inſiſt upon: and yet, as *impious* as it is, they charge it upon the *Athana-*

ſians, as the *unavoidable* Conſequence of their Principles; if their words are allowed to have any ſenſe at all. And for this very reaſon *becauſe it is impious*; the *Anti-homöouſians* of all ſects, as well as the *Sabellians*, deny any ſuch Diſtribution of the divine Subſtance to be poſſible: not only under the name *Diſtribution*, but all other names whatever which convey the ſame Idea, and imply a *Communication*, *Emiſſion*, *Emanation*, *Production*, or *Generation*, of or from the divine Subſtance; all which words imply the diviſion of Eſſence, or elſe are uſed without any meaning.

To this the Emperor *Conſtantine* and the Fathers thought it ſufficient to anſwer; that this Generation or Communication of Eſſence is not effected after the manner of Bodies; viz. by *diviſion*; but as Light is generated from Light, without any diviſion or diminution (*b*); and that thoſe who make ſuch objections conſider the divine Eſſence *corporaliter*.

To this the *Anti-homöouſians* reply; that the Communication of Subſtance muſt be either by *Partition*, as the pieces of Gold from the Maſs; or by *Derivation*, as Children from their Parents; or by *Eruption*, as the branch from the Root; but the Son of God can be *from the Father's Subſtance* by *none* of theſe ways; and there can be no other conceived: and conſequently,

(*b*) *Bull*, p. 34.—*Nicepb.* VIII. 22.

if

if they do not mean in one or other of theſe ways(c), they have no determined Senſe or Meaning to their words?

2dly. They anſwer; That when Light is communicated from one torch to another, it is as much divided; as a ſtick is by breaking it aſunder.

3dly. That the queſtion, with regard to the Generation of the Son, is not merely whether there is any *Diminution*; but whether there is any *Diviſion:* for the *diviſion* of the divine Subſtance is as *impoſſible*, as the *diminution* of it: and *Origin* declares, there muſt be a diminution in ſuch a Communication, as well as a diviſion.

4thly. It ſeems by ſuch Similitudes, that the *Athanaſians* have loſt ſight not only of the *Filiation* of the Son, but even of his Production; for the derived Light B, is not the *Son* of the Light A, from which it was derived; nor even a *new production*, but merely a *derivation*; and in that ſenſe they muſt confeſs the Holy Ghoſt to be a Son, as much as the *Logos*.

5thly. The objections here made, that thoſe who argue in this manner conſider the divine Eſſence *corporaliter*; is nothing to the Purpoſe: the argument depends upon a Truth, which is common to all Beings; and even to all abſtract Ideas; viz. that two can never be *produced out of One*, without a *diviſion:* For, till One be

(c) *Niceph.* VIII. 18.—*Socr.* I. 8.

divided, it will never become Three. Two more may be *created* indeed; but then they will not be *out of* the original One. And this the Biſhop himſelf has proved: while he was endeavouring to prove the contrary: For he ſays, as I before obſerved; "By reaſon of the ſimpli-"city of the divine Eſſence, it is *incapable of* "*Diviſion*; and by reaſon of its infinity, it is "*incapable of Multiplication*(*d*). Where then is the divine Fecundity? It is impoſſible that one ſhould become two; without becoming more than it was before in number: and every Production, that can be conceived, without *multiplication* to increaſe the *quantity*, or *diviſion* to increaſe the *number*, muſt be a *new Creation*. And the ſame conſequence muſt follow from his being generated without any *Change* in the original One.—In ſhort, to make Three out of One, and to divide One into Three, is the ſame thing. And to ſay that *two* are any how produced from *one* original Subſtance (whether material or immaterial, it matters not) without *alteration* in the original *One*; is an abſolute Contradiction; it is to ſay; that *One* becomes *Three*, while it continues to be but *One*; or that *Two* proceed from the original *One*, while they continue to be the ſame original *One* from which they proceed; and ſo *proceed* without any *proceſſion*.

(*d*) *Bulli* op. p. 138.

Another

Another argument to prove that no Emanation can be from the Subſtance of an *infinite* Being, whether it be ſuppoſed to be material or immaterial; is taken from the nature of *Infinity:* as we argue with regard to infinite *Space.* For whatever is ſaid to emane from what is infinite, muſt continue unalterably the ſame that it was before ſuch ſuppoſed Emanation: and will not (e. g.) produce another *Space,* or another *Subſtance,* but the ſame *identical Space* and *Subſtance:* for what is *infinite* cannot be *extended* or produced; nor any thing *emane,* where there is no *extra.*—And indeed, it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that it can be otherwiſe; conſiſtently with the *Immutability* of the divine nature. For the Supreme God and Father of the Univerſe ever *was,* and ever *will be, unchangeably* the *ſame;* without the leaſt Alteration in his *Subſtance* or *Attributes.* And thoſe who think differently from this, will find themſelves involved in inexplicable difficulties. And it is this undeniable Truth which militates againſt any literal *Generation* or *Production* or *Emiſſion* from the divine Eſſence; whether it be ſaid to be *exterior* or *interior.* For if it be ſuppoſed to be effected *by* any *change* in the divine Eſſence, it is inconſiſtent with his *Immutability* and neceſſary Exiſtence: and to ſuppoſe it effected *without* any *change,* is to uſe words without meaning. An interior Production, ſays Dr. *Whitby,* either ſuppoſes

ſuppoſes *ſomething* in the Father, which was not in him before that Production; or elſe *nothing*. If nothing, it is the Production of nothing [that is, no Production:] If ſomething, then ſomething *new* will be in the Father by that Production; for a Production cannot be conceived, where nothing *new* is produced(*e*). But nothing *new can* be produced in *him*, who is *always the ſame*; and conſequently there can be no ſuch Production.

"Eſt ergo hujus Eſſentiæ ſubſtantialis Pro-"ductio, rei non producibilis Productio; rei "ortum non habentis Ortus."

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Cumming's *opinion examined, concerning the Generation of the Son of God.*

THE Rev. Mr. *Cumming*, formerly Miniſter of the *Scotch* Church in *London*; whoſe Orthodoxy can no more be ſuſpected, than Dr. *Waterland*'s; (for he declares, I believe with my whole heart and ſoul, that *Jeſus* is the great God abſolutely ſupreme over all (*a*); and with great zeal and fair argument endeavours to

(*e*) Præf. Diſq. Mod. xxi. (*a*) P. 306.

ſupport

ſupport his opinion:) argues upon this ſubject as follows.—

"If the Son of God be God *himſelf*, and of "the *ſame Eſſence* with the Father; to which "Eſſence it belongs to be *uncauſed*, or to exiſt "*neceſſarily*; the Son can have *no* Cauſe or "Author: but is as much without original, as "the Father himſelf(*b*)." And again, "Men," ſays he, "may perplex a plain caſe with words "that have no meaning; but it is as evident, "as that two and two make four; that what-"ever exiſts, muſt exiſt either by *abſolute Ne-"ceſſity* of Nature, or by the *Will* and *Power* "of an other. And whatever exiſts by the "*Will* and *Power* of another (in oppoſition to "neceſſary exiſtence) is as much a *created* "thing (whatever the manner of its exiſtence "be) and as dependent on the ſovereign Will "of that other, as the meaneſt animal.

"If it be ſaid, that the Son may have his "Exiſtence by *abſolute* Neceſſity of Nature; "and yet *derive* his Being from the *Will* and "Power of the Father, as from the Supreme "Cauſe; I anſwer, that if theſe words *Derive*, "*Will*, *Cauſe*, are underſtood properly in a "philoſophical ſenſe, it is a contradiction in "Terms." And Dr. *Whitby* ſays the ſame thing; "a *neceſſary* emanation from the Father, "by the *Will* and *Power* of the Father, is an

(*b*) *Ibid.* Poſtſc. 223.

"expreſs

" expreſs Contradiction: becauſe Neceſſity in " its very nature excludes all operation of " Will; though it may be conſiſtent with " Approbation(*c*)."

" Let it be but acknowledged," ſays Mr. *Cumming*, " that the Word or *Logos* exiſts by " *abſolute Neceſſity* of Nature; that he is eter- " nally and neceſſarily what he is; and it will " follow of its own accord, that he is *ſelf-ex-* " *iſtent*; or, which is the ſame thing, that the " nature of the Son does *not depend*, as to its " exiſtence, on any *other* nature diſtinct from " itſelf. But if he will aſcribe any *proper* " *Cauſality* to the Will of the Father in the " generation; it will follow, whether we will " or no; that the Son is as much a *voluntary* " *Production*, as any *created* Angel or Spirit.— " I cannot therefore help thinking, that Dr. " *Clarke* rather acts the part of a Sophiſter " playing with words; than of a learned " Divine: when to this objection " *Every* " *thing that exiſts muſt be either God himſelf, or* " *made by him*," he anſwers; " It has been " generally thought very Orthodox to ſuppoſe, " that *ſomething may be begotten by him*(*d*): " Since he muſt know, that the notion of the " Son's being *begotten*, or *deriving his Being*

(*c*) *Whitby*'s Agreement with the Fathers; Sect. iv.— Anſwer to *Waterland*, Part II. p. 19, to 22.—Laſt Thoughts, p. 20.

(*d*) *Cumming*, p. 203.

" from

"from the Will and Power of the Father, as "from the Supreme Cauſe, in oppoſition to "*neceſſary* exiſtence; is the very ſame thing as "being made(*e*)."

From all this, which ſhews Mr. *Cumming* to have ſpoken very ſenſibly, and with great zeal and ſincerity of heart; he would conclude, that Chriſt is the ſelf-exiſtent God. But here he finds himſelf involved in as great or greater difficulties; than any he had endeavoured to avoid. For if Chriſt be ſelf-exiſtent and unoriginate, how can he be ſaid to be begotten?—The manner of his generation is here out of the diſpute; and gives way to the prior queſtion, which relates to the Origination itſelf—viz. If Chriſt be a begotten Son, whether by *Generation*, *Emanation*, *Creation*, or any other manner whatſoever, ineffable or not, inconceivable or not; he is *not* an *unoriginate* Self-exiſtent Being: for if he were *ſelf-exiſtent*, he could not be ſaid to be *generated* or *created*, or to *emane*, or be *produced*, in any manner whatſoever.

To this Mr. *Cumming* anſwers, as follows; "If it undeniably followed from the Son's "*being begotten*, that therefore he muſt be *de*-"*pendent* as to his Being and Operations, on "the *Will* and *Power* of the Father, as the "*Effect* on its proper *Cauſe*; (and conſequently

(*e*) In the Reply to *Waterland*'s Def. p. 301, the Doctor does not ſpeak out. See p. 328.

" be the Father's Creature:) I ſhould from " other things ſpoken of in Scripture, con- " clude without heſitation, that the Term *Son* " was purely *œconomical*; and did not belong " to him with reſpect to his divine præexiſtent " nature conſidered abſolutely." But, (as he explains himſelf,) merely with reſpect to his office of Meſſiah.

The reaſon why Mr. *Cumming*, though very warm and ſanguine, does not conclude this without heſitation, is this; take it in his own words. " I will not affirm, that Generation " belongs to the divine Perſons abſolutely; " neither will I preſumptuouſly deny it—As it " is not improbable, the terms *Father* and *Son* " are *purely œconomical* [relative to his office " only] ſo an *eternal neceſſary Generation* or " *Emanation* is *not impoſſible*; nor can ever be " proved to involve Contradiction." And again; " it ſufficiently anſwers my purpoſe, and " ſhews the uncertainty of the firſt Principle " upon which Dr. *Clarke* and the reſt of the " *Arians* build their doctrines of a derived de- " pendent God; that they can never certainly " prove, that the *Deity* aſcribed to our Lord in " Scripture is founded in his *Sonſhip*; nor yet " the *impoſſibility* of ſuch an *eternal neceſſary* ge- " neration, as would confeſſedly infer his being " *equally ſelf-exiſtent* with the Father."

I imagine,

I imagine, Dr. *Clarke* (who was no *Arian*, but only ſo called by his fellow Chriſtians, becauſe they think it meritorious to miſrepreſent and abuſe one another) would readily have allowed; that neither the Deity aſcribed to Chriſt in the Scripture, nor the Sonſhip itſelf, can either of them be proved to relate to his metaphyſical nature: I believe, he would rather have referred them to his *ſpiritual Authority* and *Dominion*, when he received all power in Heaven and Earth; or to his miraculous birth of the virgin *Mary*.—But as to what Mr. *Cumming* ſays farther, of ſuch an eternal neceſſary Generation of the Son, as would confeſſedly imply his Self-exiſtence and Equality with his Father; it ſeems abſolutely impoſſible: for the following reaſons:

In the firſt place, becauſe a generation of *any* kind is incompatible with *Self-exiſtence* and Equality: For *Self-exiſtence* implies, in the very idea of it, that the Being is *unoriginate*: whereas *generation*, in its very idea, implies *Origination*; and *Origination* implies *Dependency* on another. On the contrary, if an *Equality* in Exiſtence between the Father and the Son be ſuppoſed; one of theſe Conſequences muſt follow—that *Chriſt* is the *Father himſelf*, which is *Sabellianiſm*; and deſtroys the Exiſtence of the Son: or elſe that there are *two Self-exiſtent Beings*; which is *Polytheiſm*.

2dly. An eternal Generation, in the true *philoſophical* ſenſe of the word *Eternal*, is another Contradiction: For Generation ſuppoſes a Production *from* and *by* ſome other; and, conſequently, that other who begets muſt exiſt *prior* to that which is begotten; the Production therefore cannot be *properly* and *abſolutely* eternal: nor is it orthodox to think ſo; but, on the contrary, that the Son himſelf exiſted before his Generation(*f*).—The invention of Men hath been long enough upon the rack; to prove, in oppoſition to common ſenſe and reaſon, that an effect may be coeternal with the unoriginate Cauſe that produced it. But the propoſition has myſtery and falſehood written in its forehead; and is only fit to be joined with Tranſubſtantiation, and other myſteries of the ſame nature. *Novatian* ſays expreſsly; that "he who is unoriginate muſt neceſſarily "exiſt before him that is originate(*g*):" and *Euſebius* ſays; "every one will confeſs, that "the Father exiſted before the Son; and had an *hypoſtaſis* before him." And no axiom in Euclid can be more certain. It is one of thoſe truths which are hid from many of the wiſe and learned, and revealed to Babes. And *Arius* argued very juſtly; "If the Father begat

(*f*) See ch. LX.—*Cudworth*, 608. (*g*) *Socr.* B. I. ch. vi.

"the

" the Son, he that was begotten had a *beginning* " of his exiſtence(*b*)."

The argument uſed by St. *Au'ſtin* in anſwer to this, will give us a ſpecimen of the ſophiſtry with which it was oppoſed. " God is the " *Cauſe* of *all* things; but that which is the " Cauſe of *all* things, is the Cauſe of *his own* " *Wiſdom*. But God was never *without* his " Wiſdom; therefore he is the *eternal Cauſe* of " his *eternal Wiſdom* or *Word*. Nor is he prior " to his Wiſdom in Time."—By the ſame kind of reaſoning it might be proved; that, becauſe God created all things, therefore he created himſelf; and was the *Cauſe* of his own *neceſſary* exiſtence: which is a Contradiction in terms. But did not this learned Father know, that the phyſical neceſſity by which God is what he is, is no ACT; and that his Wiſdom is no EFFECT; and is not produced by any Cauſe; but is as neceſſary as his exiſtence, and merely a mode of it(*i*)?—

Socrates tells us; that *Aetius*, who is looked-upon as an Arch-heretic, having never had an academic Maſter, ſtuck cloſe to the Sophiſms of *Ariſtotle's Categories*: upon which account he could neither underſtand, how there could be a *generation* without a *beginning*: nor how that which is *begotten* could be *coeternal* with

(*b*) Lib. 73. quæſt. quæſt. 16.—*Bulli* op. 245.
(*i*) Reply to *Waterland*'s Def. 251.

him

him that *begat* it(*k*). But ſurely he had no need to have read *Ariſtotle*; to ſee what all mankind muſt aſſent-to at firſt hearing. However, it is no new thing to find men riſque their very proofs of a God; in defence of human Inſtitutions, and a favourite Hypotheſis. And this is the caſe of the preſent queſtion: For, if an *Originate* Being can be *properly* and *abſolutely eternal*, and *without beginning*; it will be impoſſible to prove, that there is *any unoriginate* Being at all. But the Univerſe may be coeternal with its Creator; and be created, without ever beginning to exiſt: and every Being in an eternal Succeſſion may be coeternal with him that begat him.

3dly. Since *neceſſary* Generation muſt always continue the ſame, and is capable of no limitation; it could not be confined to one or two Perſons or Offſprings: but muſt be infinite. The ſtrict Equaliſt, ſays Biſhop *Ruſt*, could not give any reaſon, why the Deity was not multiplied into an Infinity of Hypoſtaſes; rather than have its progreſſion ſtopped at Three. Nay, it ſeems neceſſary, by their Hypotheſis; that the Multiplication ſhould be infinite.—For the firſt Original Good communicating of himſelf to his firſt Productions, (according to the emanative fertility of its own exuberant fullneſs) If they did as fully receive

(*k*) B. II. ch. 35.

his

his Life and Power, as he their author was himſelf poſſeſſed of; the Third would be as *able* and (by neceſſity of equal plenitude) would be as much *conſtrained* (as I may ſo ſpeak with reverence) to produce three more; and ſo on perpetually. And for them to ſay, that the number was limited to Three by explicit Will and Council, is to hazard the neceſſary exiſtence, and conſequently the Divinity of the two *Hypoſtaſes*; and to induce ſuch an indifferency into the firſt and earlieſt operations of the Author of all things, as is inconſiſtent with infinitely full Goodneſs(*l*); and no leſs ſo with abſolute Neceſſity: for abſolute Neceſſity, dependent on Volition, is a Contradiction.

For theſe reaſons, I ſhall make no ſcruple to conclude; that ſuch an *eternally neceſſary* generation of the Son, as would *neceſſarily* imply his *Self-exiſtence* and Equality with the Father, as Mr. *Cumming* ſuppoſes; is abſolutely impoſſible.

(*l*) *Phœnix*, Vol. I. p. 13.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XII.

A ſummary view of the difficulties which attend the homöouſian *Faith, and the arguments which are generally uſed by the learned Chriſtians in the defence of it; by way of* Queries.

Qu. 1. WHETHER the notion of the One Supreme God, as repreſented by the *Athanaſians* to conſiſt of three Subſtances joined together by a *perichoreſis*, like a threefold Cord (*a*); two of them *originate* and one *unorginate*: does not ſeem to imply; that he is not a *Simple*, but a *Compound* Being?

Qu. 2. Whether the notion of *one* Subſtance only, to the *three* Perſons; as held by the *Sabellians*: does not deſtroy the real Trinity of *Hypoſtaſes*, and only leaves a Trinity of *Modes* (*b*)?

Qu. 3. Whether, if there be *three* Perſons ὑυπόσαλοι [ſubſtantial] in every reſpect equal, and *each* of *himſelf* God; as declared by the *Pſeudo-Athanaſians*; there can be any *real Unity* (*c*)?

Qu. 4. If there be three Perſons, in every reſpect equal; and theſe *three* are all joined

(*a*) Chap. III. 999. (*b*) Ch. III. p. 997.
(*b*) *Ibid.* 998.

toge-

together in one Subſtance: whether they will not be *three Gods* in *one Subſtance* (*d*)?

Qu. 5. Whether the notion of a *Perichoreſis*, by which the *Athanaſians* ſuppoſe the three Subſtances of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are joined together, like a threefold Cord; ſo that without this there would be three Gods: is built upon any Authority of Scripture (*e*)?

Qu. 6. Whether the Father and Son are not repreſented in the Scripture as *ſeparate* and *diſtinct* Beings; ſo that the one is ἕτερος τῷ πατρὸς ἀριθμῷ, another and diſtinct from the Father in number: as underſtood by *Juſtin Martyr* (*f*)?

Qu. 7. If they be not diſtinct and ſeparate Beings, how could one of them be born of the Virgin *Mary*, *diſtinct* and *ſeparate from* the other two?

Qu. 8. Whether a *Perſon*, abſtracted and ſeparate from its Subſtance, is not a mere *mode* of Exiſtence and *non-entity* (*g*)?

Qu. 9. Whether Subſtance can be communicated to a *non-entity* or mere *mode* of exiſtence?

Qu. 10. Whether any *Perſon* can poſſibly exiſt *prior* to, or *poſterior* to, or any-how *ſeparate from* its *Eſſence*?

(*d*) *Ibid.* 998. (*e*) *Ibid.* (*f*) Ch. I. 955. (*g*) *Bull.* & *Petav.* c. ii. p. 18.

Qu. 11. If the *Perſon* of Chriſt cannot exiſt *poſterior* to his *Eſſence*; whether his *Perſon* muſt not be *unoriginate* and *unbegotten* as well as his *Eſſence?*

Qu. 12. Whether a *Plurality* of *Perſons* exiſting *originally* in the Infinite Being does not imply a *Plurality* of *Gods* (*h*)?

Qu. 13. Whether any Perſon can exiſt *eternally* in the infinite Being; who does not exiſt in it *originally?*

Qu. 14. Whether any Perſon can *begin* to exiſt in the divine Nature or Subſtance, wherein it did not exiſt *originally*; ſalving the divine Immutability? *Whitby.*

Qu. 15. Whether an unoriginate Being, who had no beginning, did not exiſt *prior* to Him, who *had* a beginning, and received his exiſtence from him (*i*)?

Qu. 16. Whether a Production can be *coeternal* with the unoriginate Being who produced it?

Qu. 17. Whether any one can be begotten *into Being*, after his Exiſtence?

Qu. 18. Whether, if Chriſt exiſted, *before* he was begotten; he was not *unbegotten* (*k*)?

Qu. 19. Whether it is poſſible to make a Perſon who is *begotten* to be *unbegotten?* If God is unbegotten, as to his Eſſence; how can it be ſaid, that which is begotten is of his Eſſence?

(*h*) *Pearſon.* (*i*) *Euſeb.* & *Novat.* 125. (*k*) *Eunomius.*

How

How can the ſame Eſſence be both begotten and unbegotten? *Aëtius.*

Qu. 20. Whether any Being can be begotten in an unbegotten manner?

Qu. 21. Whether the Son was begotten by the Father voluntarily, or involuntarily? If involuntarily, then God was led by neceſſity of Nature; but if voluntarily, then the *Will* exiſted before the Son; which to aſſert, is to fall into *Arianiſm. Epiph. Ancorat.* Ch. LII. falſely marked LI. This is anſwered by *Epiphanius*; by ſaying, the Son was neither begotten *with* the Will of the Father, nor without it; but by an excellency of Nature: ἀλλ' ὑπέροχῃ φύσεως. But the queſtion here returns; was the Son begotten *voluntarily* or *involuntarily*, by this Excellency of Nature?

Qu. 22. Whether a Generation into a Subſtance, *poſterior* to an exiſtence as an attribute, can properly be eternal?

Qu. 23. Whether a *ſelf-exiſtent* Subſtance can be *generated* or *produced?*

Qu. 24. Whether the Generation of a *ſelf-exiſtent* Subſtance would produce any thing that *was not before?*

Qu. 25. Whether a *ſelf-exiſtent* Subſtance, *after* its Generation or Production, could continue to be *ſelf-exiſtent* and *unoriginate?*

Qu. 26. Whether the generation of the Son be ſuch a *proper* act of generation, as is the foundation of *Paternity?*

Qu. 27. Whether, if the *ſelf-exiſtent Subſtance* generated the *ſelf-exiſtent Subſtance*; the Father did not beget himſelf?

Qu. 28. Whether the generation of the Son could be *out of* the Father's Subſtance, without a *diminution* of the *paternal Eſſence* (*l*)?

Qu. 29. Whether there can be any Communication of Subſtance to a Being, before his *actual* Exiſtence? If not,

Qu. 30. How could the firſt Originate Being receive his Exiſtence [qua γενέσει] by ſuch Communication?

Qu. 31. Whether mere Communication of Subſtance does any thing more than alter the *mode* of Exiſtence; without affecting the *exiſtence itſelf?* every thing exiſting after ſuch a Communication, which exiſted before; but only in another manner.

Qu. 32. Whether Communication of Subſtance, *without Separation of Subſtance*, will produce either another Subſtance or another Perſon?

Qu. 33. Whether Communication of Subſtance, conſidered only as the *admiſſion* of another Being into Participation of Subſtance, is any new Production; or can poſſibly produce another Perſon?

Qu. 34. Whether a partial Communication of the divine Subſtance is not a contradiction to his divine *Incorruptibility?*

(*l*) *Origen.*

Qu. 35.

Qu. 35. Whether a *total* Communication of the divine Subſtance is not an *impoſſibility?* and whether it would produce another Perſon?

Qu. 36. Whether a Communication of Subſtance, *without any change,* is not a contradiction?

Qu. 37. Whether a Communication of the divine Subſtance, *by any change,* is not inconſiſtent with the divine Immutability? *Whitby.*

Qu. 38. Whether a Being can communicate its Subſtance to *itſelf*; or *beget* its *own* Subſtance?

Qu. 39. Whether the divine Subſtance could be communicated to the divine attribute of Wiſdom; to which it was *eternally* joined by neceſſity of Nature?

Qu. 40. If the *Wiſdom* of the Father, became a *Perſon diſtinct* and *different* from the Father; whether the Father muſt not be *deſtitute* of his Wiſdom (*m*)?

Qu. 41. Whether there can be any Production *out of* an infinite Subſtance, where there is no *extra?*

Qu. 42. Whether an *interior* Production can be made, without any change of the divine Subſtance; any more than an *exterior* one?

Qu. 43. Whether an *interior* Production, where nothing is produced; or an *exterior* Produc-

(*m*) *Alexander Alexand.* See his Letter to *Socrates,* lib. i.

tion,

tion, without any change; can either of them produce a ſecond Perſon?

Qu. 44. Whether an interior Production *within* the Subſtance of the Father, [ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ,] is conſiſtent with the Production which the *Athanaſians* contend for, and declare to be *out* of the Subſtance of the Father [ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας]?

Qu. 45. If the *Perſon* of Chriſt be any thing diſtinct from his *Subſtance*; as Biſhop *Pearſon* ſuppoſes; and Generation ſignifies to be born into a ſimilitude of Nature, as he likewiſe aſſerts; (πᾶν τὸ γεννᾶν ὅμοιον ἑαυτῷ γεννᾷ, as *Epiphanius* expreſſes it;) how can the *Perſon* of Chriſt be ſuppoſed to be generated by communication of *Subſtance only?*

Qu. 46. Whether the *Subſtance* can be communicated, without the *Attributes?*

Qu. 47. Whether the *Subſtance* and *Attributes* can be communicated, without the *Perſon?*

Qu. 48. If both the *Subſtance* and *Perſon* of the Father be communicated to the Son; whether he will not be the *ſame Perſon*, as well as the *ſame Subſtance*, with the Father?

Qu. 49. Whether there can be a Production, *from* or *out of* any one Subſtance; without a *Diviſion* of that one Subſtance, *from* or *out of* which it is produced?

Qu. 50. If any Subſtance proceeds from *one*; whether it muſt not be *ſeparated* from that one, before

before it can become a *ſecond* Perſon or another?

Qu. 51. If a ſecond Perſon is produced from the Father's Subſtance, of the ſame *nature* and *Subſtance* with the Father; and the Subſtance be the Godhead, according to the doctrine of the *Athanaſians*; whether he will not be *another God?*

Qu. 52. But if this ſecond Perſon is not a Being or Subſtance *ſeparate* and *different* from the Father; how can he be ſaid to be *produced? Irenæus.*

Qu. 53. If mere Communication of Subſtance be the *proper* Generation of a *Son*; whether the Holy Ghoſt is not a *Son*, as well as the *Logos?*

Qu. 54. Whether an indiviſible Diviſion, and a divided Conjunction, are not Contradictions?

Qu. 55. Whether Chriſt *actually* deſcended from Heaven; or only *quaſi? Bull.*

Qu. 56. Whether Chriſt *actually* diveſted himſelf of his Glory; or whether it was only in APPEARANCE? *Waterland.*

Qu. 57. Whether exiſtence in *Idea* or in *Potentia* be any *real* exiſtence of the *Things*; or only of the Idea?

Qu. 58. Whether any Perſon can *ſuffer*, without feeling *Pain? Hilary.*

Qu. 59.

Qu. 59. Whether any Perſon can feel Pain; except in his own Subſtance or Eſſence?

Qu. 60. Whether an *impaſſible Subſtance* is capable of feeling Pain in any Nature or Perſon?

Qu. 61. Whether if God is not *One* in *Number*, as well as in *Nature*; there is not *more* than One God?

Qu. 62. Whether He is not the *only One* God; who hath no Superior, to whom no other was the Cauſe of his exiſtence, who is the head of the Son, and his God? See the words of *Euſebius* quoted in Chap. I.

Qu. 63. Whether the word *God* is not uſed in Scripture in different ſenſes?

Qu. 64. Whether any Being can be coeternal with itſelf? *Athanaſius.*

Qu. 65. Whether two *eternal* Beings are not two *Gods*?

Qu. 66. Whether all communicable Perfections may not be communicated to a *created* Being? And if ſo,

Qu. 67. Whether the *incommunicable* Perfections of God can be communicated to *any* Being?

Qu. 68. If *all communicable* Perfections may be communicated to a *created* Being; and *no incommunicable* Perfections can be communicated to *any* Being; is it not profane and impious to aſſert, that God may not, if he pleaſes, give to a *created* Being, all the Perfections that can be given to a *begotten* Being? and

exalt

exalt him above all Principalities and Powers, and make him our Creator and Lord and King, with ſpiritual dominion over us, to give eternal Life to as many as he will?

Qu. 69. Whether neceſſary exiſtence, by the *will* of another, be not a Contradiction?

Qu. 70. Whether generation of Subſtance by *neceſſity* of Nature, is not *incapable* of limitation; and muſt not be *infinite* in its Productions?

Qu. 71. Whether a *begotten* Being is not an *Originate* Being? and whether *Origination* does not imply *Dependence* and *Inferiority*, as much as *Creation?*

Qu. 72. Whether *Creation* is any more a Derogation, becauſe it is common to all except the Unoriginate One; than *Exiſtence* and *Subſtance* are derogations to the Unoriginate One; both which are common to all Beings whatever (*n*)?

Qu. 73. If the Apoſtles themſelves were not ſuch Proficients, as to underſtand the eternal generation of the Son to be from the *Father's*

(*n*) It is upon this account that *Plotinus* argued, that God was above all Eſſence. He might juſt as ſafely have concluded, that he was above all Exiſtence: becauſe all other Beings exiſt. (*Cudworth*, 585.) *Conſtantine* ſpeaks in the ſame manner; as if God was above Eſſence: and quotes it as the opinion of *Plato*. Oration to the Convent of Saints, ch. iii. and ix. in the works of *Euſebius*.

Subſtance; as *Jerom* confeſſes: how can ſuch a Belief be neceſſary to Salvation?

Qu. 74. If the Faith of the *Antenicenes*, with regard to ſo many of theſe Queſtions, is liable to few or none of theſe difficulties; is it not more likely to be the true and Apoſtolic Faith?

N. B. If it had been revealed, that the Son of God was begotten from the *Father's Subſtance*; all the above difficulties would be overruled by divine Authority: but, as no ſuch revelation can be produced, they militate very ſtrongly againſt ſuch an opinion.

If the ſimple queſtion had been merely, in what *manner* the *Son* was originated; the *exiſtence* itſelf would not have been queſtioned: and it might have been anſwered very properly, we know not how; or, in the words of *Conſtantine*, that it was effected *divinis arcaniſque rationibus*: and with this anſwer both the *Athanaſians* and *Arians* ſhould have acquieſced; as reſolving the *cauſe* and *manner* into the ſecret ways of Providence. But the queſtion between the *Arians* and *Athanaſians* was very different—It did not relate ſimply to the *manner* of the Son's *Exiſtence*; but to the *manner of his Exiſtence from the Father's Subſtance*: upon which queſtion the *Arians* denied the Fact; and argued, that it was premature to explain the manner of his *exiſtence from the Father's*

Father's Subſtance; either by the *power* of God, or by any *other* medium; till the Fact itſelf was proved, that he *did exiſt from the Father's Subſtance:* which they ſuppoſed to be impoſſible, and impious to aſſert.

CHAPTER XIII.

That many learned, pious, and judicious writers have rejected the metaphyſical Queſtion of the Son's Generation; and explained it purely in an Oeconomical Senſe.

THERE are ſeveral ingenious men among the Chriſtians, who have obſerved; that the metaphyſical nature of the Son of God is no where explained or revealed in the Scripture. They obſerve; that the words, ἐκ Θεοῦ, that he came *from* God, do not neceſſarily relate to his Generation; but may as well relate to his Miſſion: and the ſame words are uſed with regard to Men: that the New Teſtament never enters into ſuch metaphyſical queſtions; which only end in doubtful diſputations and diviſions, when conſidered as neceſſary to be believed in any particular manner: and therefore they totally diſapprove of making a ſubject ſo contrary to the genius of the Chriſtian Revelation a matter of Chriſtian Faith and Orthodoxy: and theſe

blame both the *Athanaſians* and *Arians*, for beginning ſuch diſputes: and in this they agree with the opinion of *Conſtantine*, in his excellent letter to *Athanaſius* and *Arius*; which I have given the Reader at the end of theſe papers(*a*). They obſerve: that, before the metaphyſical Generation of the Son was attempted to be explained, we were only ignorant of what it was *not* neceſſary for us to know; ignorant of what the Fathers declare it is impoſſible for us to know: and Experience ſhews us; that, after all diſputes upon it, the world is no more ſatisfied upon the ſubject; than it was 1400 years ago. Men of the greateſt Piety and Learning, after all the pains they have taken to underſtand theſe queſtions, are reflected-upon, on all ſides; as Heretics and Blaſphemers: and no proſpect appears, that promiſes they will ever be decided with certainty; or examined without rancour and ill-will. From theſe and other material conſiderations, many learned and pious Chriſtians have been inclined to believe; that the Generation of the Son ought rather to be explained in an œconomical, than in a philoſophical or metaphyſical ſenſe; as the words *Son* and *begotten* Son are underſtood in other parts of Scripture; and to be applied to his receiving the office of a Mediator; as Dr. *Waterland* explains the third Generation of Chriſt, which

(*a*) Append. No. IV.

he

he ſpeaks-of as a Miſſion, Manifeſtation, or Exertion, or taking a new office; and ſays, there is no change at all in it; not ſo much as in any mode of Exiſtence(*b*). In which ſenſe the words τῷ ποιήσαντι, that *made* him(*c*), ſeem to be uſed by St. *Paul*; which are juſtly tranſlated, that *appointed* him. And ſo in *Prov.* viii. 22. the word ἐκτίσθη, was created, is explained by *Euſebius* to ſignify that God *ordained* or *appointed* Chriſt to reign over all things; "ut eo loco "verbum ἔκτισε, *creavit* pro verbo *ordinavit*, ſeu "*conſtituit*, ſit dictum." And he confirms the interpretation by ſeveral critical obſervations on other Texts(*d*).

Limborch in his *Amica collatio* tells us; that, when our Faith in Chriſt is required, it is never required to believe him to be *God himſelf*; but that he is the *Meſſiah*, formerly promiſed; or, what is the ſame thing, that he is the *Son of God*: becauſe the appellations of the *Chriſt* and the *Son of God* are reciprocal. And he ſuppoſes; that the words of *David*; *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*(*e*)—and the words of God; *I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son* (*f*); which were originally ſpoken of *Solomon* in a figurative ſenſe, and were in a

(*b*) Obſervations on Dr. *Waterland*'s Second Defence; p. 58, 59, 69, 72. (*c*) *Niceph.* ix. 13.—*Euſeb.* cont. *Marcel.* (*d*) *Heb.* iii. 2. (*e*) *Pſ.* ii. 7. (*f*) II *Sam.* viii. 17.

moſt

moſt ſolemn manner applied to *Chriſt*(*g*); gave occaſion to this denomination of a *Son*. And thence it came to paſs; that the expreſſions, *Chriſt*, or *the Meſſiah*, and the *Son* of *God*, were conſidered among the *Jews* and the diſciples of *Chriſt* to be reciprocal; as they appear to be, from many places of the New Teſtament.

Mr. *Cumming* ſpeaks in the ſame manner: and ſays, there is not any one place in the old Teſtament; where *Son*, or *Seed*, or any expreſſion denoting *Emanation*, is uſed of *Meſſias*; but what may without any violence be imputed to refer to his *Office* of Mediator, or to the Oeconomy of his Providence(*h*). And it cannot be denied; that, in the Jewiſh ſenſe of Phraſeology, to be the *Son* of *God*, by way of prëeminence, was to be the *Meſſiah*; and to be the *Meſſiah*, was to be the *Son* of *God*(*i*).

The places quoted by *Limborch*, to prove that *Meſſiah* and *Son of God* are reciprocal and convertible terms; are theſe: *Jo.* i. 46. to 50. *Mat.* xvi. 16. compared with *Mark* viii. 29. and *Luke* ix. 20. *Nathaniel* anſwereth; *Rabbi*, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of *Iſrael*. And when Chriſt aſked his diſciples, Whom ſay ye that I am? *Peter* anſwered, according to St. *Matt.* Thou art *Chriſt*, the *Son* of the living *God*; and, according to St. *Mark*,

(*g*) See *Sykes* on the *Heb.*—Append. No. I. (*h*) P. 205. (*i*) *Ibid.* 207.

Thou

Thou art the *Chriſt*; and, according to St. *Luke*, Thou art the *Chriſt* of God.—In like manner when the high Prieſt adjured Chriſt to tell him if he be *Chriſt*, the *Son of God: Matt.* xvi. 63. (which is more plainly expreſſed in *Luke* xxii. the Elders and the chief Prieſts ſaid; If thou art the *Chriſt*, tell us;) and repeated the ſame queſtion in the 70th verſe, Art thou *the Son of God?* This plainly proves, that *Meſſiah* or *Chriſt* or *Son of God* meaned the ſame thing. And this, he ſays, is the opinion of the moſt eminent of the Chriſtians; as *Epiſcopius*, *Eraſmus*, *Grotius*, &c. I ſhall only quote a few remarkable paſſages; and refer my reader to the book itſelf. He tells us from *Eraſmus*; that the Expreſſion *Son of God* may be uſed of a Prophet, as well as of the *Son of God*; and is ſo uſed by *Chriſt:* and that when *Peter* confeſſeth *Chriſt* to be *the Son* of the living *God*; though he ſpake by inſpiration, yet it is not credible that he believed then fully, that *Jeſus* was the *Son* of *God* as to his *Nature*; of the *ſame Eſſence* with him: and that, when *Nathaniel* confeſſes him to be the *Son of God*, he had the ſame notion of him as St. *Peter*—And *Grotius* ſays; the *Son of God* was a name commonly given to the *Meſſias:* and that the words of *Nathaniel* are taken from the ſecond Pſalm; which the ancient *Hebrews* interpreted

in

in a myſtical Senſe of the *Meſſias*(*k*). And when *Jeſus* is called by *Peter*, *Chriſt*, *the Son of* the living *God*; *Mark* and *Luke* uſe only the word *Chriſt*: and ſo they uſe the words as ſynonymous. And upon the words of *Nathaniel* he obſerves, that the *Son of God* means the ſame as *Meſſias*: and laſtly, he obſerves; that *Chriſt* himſelf affirms the Epithet *Son of God*, was given him in that ſenſe. *Jo.* x. 34, 35.

Dr. *Whitby* takes notice; that to be *of God*, is the ſame as to be *ſent from God*, to *come from God*, or to be the *Son* of God(*l*). And Biſhop *Patrick*, in his treatiſe called "The Witneſſes to Chriſtianity," which he dedicated to Archbiſhop *Sheldon*, lays it down in the plaineſt terms; that theſe two expreſſions, *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, and *Jeſus* is the *Son of God*, are the ſame in *meaning*; and import his *being ſent* into the World *by God*, as he profeſſed himſelf to be. And he quotes with approbation the opinion of *Jerom*; "that the Apoſtles were not yet "ſuch proficients, as to underſtand the eternal "Generation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the "Eſſence of the Father, when this Phraſe, the "*Son of God*, was firſt uſed by them: which "therefore could not ſignify any thing, but the "*Meſſiah* promiſed and ſent into the world by "God.—And he cites and approves of *Lactan-*

(*k*) *Sykes* on the *Heb.*—Append. No. I. (*l*) Laſt Thoughts, p. 116.

"*tius*,

"*tius*, that the name of *Chriſt* was a name of "*Power* and *Dominion*; ſignifying him to be "their Sovereign, *Sic enim Judæi reges ſuos* "*appellabant*; for in this Style the *Jews* were "wont to ſpeak of their Kings; which are "called *Chriſts*, or *God*'s anointed(*m*)."

Limborch ſays; it clearly appears, that the name *Chriſt*, or *Son of God, as an object* of the Chriſtian Faith, is not the denomination of a *Nature* or *Perſon*; but of an *Office*; becauſe the *Chriſts*, or the *anointed* ones, were appointed and conſecrated by their Unction to ſome particular Office. Now the Senſe of any Propoſition depends on the connection between the Subject and Predicate; ſo that, when the Senſe of the Subject or Predicate appears, the Senſe of the Propoſition is manifeſt. And therefore when *Jeſus*, the *Subject* of this Propoſition, ſignifies the perſon or man, at that time well known in *Judæa*, and famous for his miracles, and afterwards crucified, and at length raiſed from the dead, and carried into heaven; and *Chriſt* or *Son of God*, ſignifies an Office no leſs known among the *Jews*, or rather a man honoured with that eminent Office; to-wit, that famous King and Redeemer of his people, ſo often promiſed to them by the Prophets; it follows, that to believe *Jeſus* to be the *Chriſt* or

(*m*) *Patrick*'s Witneſſes, p. 10.

Son of God, denotes no more than to believe that *Jeſus* is that eminent Saviour ſo long promiſed; to whom the Office of ſaving Mankind was given by the Father, and who, to begin that Office, was largely endowed by the Father; and anointed, as it were, with the Holy Spirit. Hence it is; that the Scripture, when it deſcribes the Faith by which we are to be ſaved, makes no mention of thoſe things which reſpect properly his *Perſon* and divine *Nature*; but his *Office*(*n*). And whatever elſe is ſaid of his *Perſon*, is never required as neceſſary to be believed.

This notion is alſo maintained by *Crellius* and *Wolzogen*: *Crellius* ſays; the *Son of God*, and *Chriſt*, generally denote the ſame thing in the Scriptures; whereby it appears, that there is no neceſſity of deriving the ſignification of the term *Son of God* from an *eternal Generation* out of the Subſtance of the Father(*o*). And *Wolzogen* ſays; the *Meſſiah*, according to the common cuſtom of the Jews, was called ſimply and by way of excellence, the *Son of God*; as his proper name: that the name *Chriſt* or *Meſſias*, and the name *Son of God*, were in the *Jewiſh* uſage taken for *one* and the *ſame* thing(*p*). And it was for this opinion, that Profeſſor *Roel* was ſuſpended by the province of *Holland*; and

(*n*) *Rom.* x. 9.—1 *Jo.* v. 1. (*o*) *Crell.* op. tom. II. p. 272. (*p*) *Wolzogen* op. tom. I. p. 314.

articles

articles were drawn up againſt him, to be ſigned by all the Preachers and Candidates for the miniſtry(q): and yet this notion is confirmed by the Apoſtles, who agree with the ancient Rabbins to interpret the words of the ſecond Pſalm, "this day have I begotten thee," to be ſpoken of *Chriſt*; and to relate, not to any *eternal Generation*, but to the *time* which is referred-to in the ſeventh verſe; "to give him "the Heathen for his inheritance, and the "uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion; "which was not completed till his Reſurrection, "when all power was given him in heaven and "earth(r); and He became our High-Prieſt: "and thus it is interpreted by St. *Paul*; Chriſt, "ſays he, glorified not himſelf to be made a "High-Prieſt; [he did not take upon himſelf "that dignity] but he that ſaid unto him, "Thou art my Son; this day have I *begotten* "thee(s):" that is, this day have I *exalted* thee, and *appointed* thee to that Office: as I obſerved, the word ποιήσαι is uſed, *Heb.* iii. 2.

In another place the Apoſtle ſays; God hath fulfilled the promiſe [given to the Fathers] to their Children, in that he hath raiſed *Jeſus* from the dead; as it is alſo written in the ſecond Pſalm, "Thou art my Son; this day

(q). *Evans*'s Second Letter to Mr. *Cumming*, p. 134, 136. (r) *Mat.* xxviii. 18. (s) *Heb.* v. 5. vide *Sykes* ad loc.

have I begotten Thee." And ſo the *Jews* ſpeak on Pſ. lxxii. 17. *filiabitur nomen ejus.* For, ſay they, the *Meſſiah*'s name is called *Jerinon*; *quia ipſe filiaturus eſt omnes dormientes in pulvere:* becauſe he will make Sons of all that ſleep in the duſt(*t*). And the ſame Apoſtle tells us, that Chriſt obtained the name of Son from Inheritance, [not by *natural generation*] when he became *heir* of all things, which was *after* his Reſurrection; and relates to the *ſame time* as when he became our High Prieſt: being made ſo much better than the Angels, ſays the Apoſtle, as he hath by *inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than they: for unto which of the Angels ſaid he at any time, Thou art my Son; *this day* have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father; and he ſhall be to me a Son(*u*)? The Apoſtle therefore does not ſpeak of any other Sonſhip or Generation, in theſe texts; than merely an *exaltation* to power and glory, in the ſame ſenſe in which *Abarbanel* underſtands the word, *a Deo genitus*; *id eſt, evectus in imperium non in Homines tantum ſed et in Angelos.* And Chriſt explains it in the ſame manner; in his anſwer to the accuſation of the *Jews*, that he made himſelf God. "Is it not "written in your Law, I ſaid, ye are *Gods?* if "he (*Moſes*) calls them *God*, unto whom the "*Word* of God *came*; how ſay ye of Him,

(*t*) *Midrach Tillim* in *Pſ.* xciii. 2.

(*u*) *Heb.* i. 5.

"whom

" whom the Father hath *ſanctified* and *ſent* into " the world, thou blaſphemeſt; becauſe I ſaid, " I am the *Son of God*(*x*)?" Here he plainly aſſerts himſelf to be the *Son of God*; becauſe he was *ſanctified* and *ſent* into the world to *take upon* him the *Office* of *Meſſiah*.—And in this ſenſe *Origen* ſpeaking of *Simon Magus*, and ſuch like perſons, ſays; they called themſelves the *Sons of God*, or the *power* of God (*y*); which he conſiders as titles of like ſignification: and the learned and ingenious Mr. *Bryant* obſerves, that ſo early as *Homer*'s time, and long before, the Prieſts and Votaries were often ſtiled the *Sons* and *Daughters* of the Deity they ſerved(*z*).

It is very certain, that other words, which are equivalent to that of *Son*, are uſed in Scripture in the ſame ſenſe. Thus in the lxxxvii. Pſalm, " I will make him my *firſt-born*; higher " than the Kings of the Earth:" and ſo it is ſaid, " *Iſrael* is my *firſt-born*(*a*)." And the words *only Son*, appear to mean in ſome places, the *moſt beloved* or *favoured*; as when *Iſaac* is called the *only Son* of *Abraham*, though *Iſhmael* was then living(*b*). And *Solomon* is called the *only Son* of his mother, when ſhe had other Children by *David*; as is obſerved by Biſhop

(*x*) *John* x. 34, 35. (*y*) *Contra Celſ.* lib. I. p. 44. and 64. (*z*) *Bryant*, vol. II. p. 446. (*a*) *Ex.* iv. (*b*) *Gen.* xxii. 12 to 14.

Pearſon

Pearſon(*c*). And ſo the words muſt be explained in the *Canticles* (*d*); my dove, my undefiled, is *only one*; ſhe is the *only one* of her mother; ſhe is the choice one of her that bare her; and yet ſhe had at that time a ſiſter(*e*).—In the New Teſtament God is ſaid in the ſame ſenſe to do many things, that Chriſt may be the *firſt-born* of many brethren (*f*): and he is called the *firſt-born* of the whole Creation(*g*). Upon which Dr. *Hammond* remarks; that, beſides the ordinary notion of firſt-born (which cannnot ſo well refer here to Chriſt's eternal Generation) it is uſed ſometimes for a *Lord*, or *Perſon in power*; who hath the *privilege* of the firſt-born, *dominion* over all his brethren; and is ſo uſed for a Prince(*h*).—And God hath promiſed in the Revelation of St. *John*, "He that overcometh "ſhall inherit all things;" and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my *Son*(*i*). Here the future Sonſhip of him that overcometh is to be by Inheritance; as St. *Paul* deſcribes the Sonſhip of Chriſt to be: And theſe texts all relate to a State of *favour* and *exaltation*, and not to a *literal generation*; becauſe the Perſons are ſuppoſed to have an exiſtence, *before* they were made the firſt-born. Beſides, in a literal Senſe,

(*c*) 1 *Chron.* iii. 1, 2, 3.—*Pearſon*, 139. (*d*) *Cant.* vi. 9. (*e*) *Cant.* viii. 8. (*f*) *Rom.* viii. 29. (*g*) *Col.* i. 15. (*h*) *Pſ.* lxviii. 27.—*Job* xviii. 13, &c. (*i*) *Rev.*

there

there can be but *one* firſt-born: whereas the righteous are ſaid to come to the general *aſſembly* and *Church of the firſt-born* πρωτοτόκων (*k*). And conſequently, the word can only ſignify in this place, *dignity* and privilege; the privilege of becoming *Sons of God* by adoption, and *Heirs of* God, through Chriſt; as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in ſeveral places (*l*).

At other times the Apoſtles carry-on the figure, without mentioning *Adoption*; confining it to a Sonſhip by *Generation:* and yet, even here, the *Generation* is *figurative*; as, every one that loveth God is *begotten* of God (*m*): and whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is *begotten* of God. How is this conſiſtent with the literal ſenſe of the words, that Chriſt is the *only begotten?* And he is ſaid to beget us by the word of Truth (*n*); which explains the Figure. And in the ſame ſenſe the Miniſters of the Goſpel are ſaid to *beget Sons*, when they convert to Chriſtianity; as St. *Paul* ſays of *Oneſimus*, I have *begotten* thee through the Goſpel; and therefore calls him his *Son*, *begotten* in his bonds (*o*).

It is moreover remarkable; that the title *Son of God* was given to the *Jehovah Angel* by *Philo* (*p*); and this, without any notion of a literal generation from the Father's Subſtance: and it

(*k*) *Heb.* xii. 23. (*l*) *Gal.* iv. 5.—*Rom.* viii. 23, &c. (*m*) *John* iv. 7. (*n*) *Jam.* i. 8. (*o*) I *Cor.* iv. 15. —*Phil.* 10. (*p*) *Allix Jewiſh* Ch. p. 134.

is

is allowed by very learned Chriſtians, that the Evangeliſts ſpake the ſame language with *Philo* and the Jews of that age: and it is therefore probable, that the phraſe was then underſtood *figuratively*; according to the eaſtern dialect. But be that as it may, we know that the Sons of *Seth* were called the *Sons of God* (*q*); and the Angels(*r*), and *Iſrael*(*s*), and *Adam* (*t*); and *Chriſt* has given power to all who believe in him to become the *Sons of God* (*u*); and to be partakers of the divine Nature (*x*); and we are uſed to much harder figures of ſpeech, in the prophetic language; where God is deſcribed not only as a *Father*, but a *Huſband*(*y*), and a *Shepherd* of his people; and they are called his *Spouſe*, his *Flock*, his *Vineyard*, and are ſaid to be *married* to him (*z*); and to be *fed* and *planted* by him: And in ſhort, there can be no more reaſon for Chriſtians to believe a *literal Generation* of Chriſt *from the Father's Subſtance*, merely becauſe he is called the *Son of God*; than to ſuppoſe the ſame of Angels and Men, who are alſo called the Sons of God; and were formerly believed to be alſo conſubſtantial with Him.

(*q*) *Gen.* vi. 2. (*r*) *Job* i. 6. xxxviii. 7. (*s*) *Ex.* iv. 22.—*Hoſ.* i. 10.—*Jer.* xxxi. 9. (*t*) *Luke* iii. 28. (*u*) *John* i. 12.—*Rom.* viii. 14, 19.—*Phil.* xi. 15.—*John*, iii. 1, 2. (*x*) II *Pet.* i. 4. (*y*) *Jer.* xxxi. 32. (*z*) *Jer.* iii. 14.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIV.

The Concluſion.

FROM the whole of what has been ſaid in the foregoing Chapters, concerning the philoſophical notions about the antemundane generation of the Son of God; (a ſubject, never once ſpoken-of through the whole new Teſtament;) I ſhall make the following Obſervations and Concluſions.

1. That the doctrine of the *homöouſians*, which ſuppoſes the Subſtance of the *Son* of God to be the *infinite* and *impaſſible* Subſtance of the *Father*; is inconſiſtent with the belief, that He did actually deſcend from Heaven, and ſuffer pain and death. And therefore a conſiſtent Chriſtian muſt either deny his deſcent and ſuffering; as our moſt orthodox Divines have not ſcrupled to do (*a*): or elſe he muſt give-up the belief of

(*a*) Dr. *South* ſays; it is *impoſſible*, for the divine Nature of Chriſt to come down from Heaven—Dr. *Sherlock* ſays; that *properly* it cannot be—Biſhop *Fowler*; that he could not *properly* come down from Heaven, any more than God the Father; from whom he is inſeparable—Biſhop *Bull*; that his deſcent was *quaſi*—Dr. *Waterland*; that it was only in *appearance*. *Cyril*, *Epiphanius*, and the Councils; that it was only a Soul and Body that felt the pain of the Croſs; the Subſtance of Chriſt, which was with God in the beginning, being impaſſible. See Letter III. Poſtſcript.

the *homöoufian* doctrine. The former of these Doctrines, viz. that the same person, who was in the beginning with God, did actually descend and suffer; is founded on plain words of Scripture; the latter, that he *did not*, and *could not* descend and suffer; depends merely upon the decrees of Councils and metaphysical Argument.

2. In canvassing this Question, there is no trusting to the opinions either of the Fathers or Councils; the opinions of both having been shewn to be contradictory to one another; and the Councils, to have been carried-on too often by Force or Fraud and the Decrees of Councils corrupted or forged.

3. On the other side of the question, we find; that the *Antenicenes*, who in general believed the Son of God to be the Angel of the Covenant; and the modern very respectable Divines quoted in the last chapter; and others mentioned in the tenth note of the first letter, and many other learned and pious Divines, believed; that the Son of God did actually descend from Heaven, and feel the pains of the Cross, in the very *same* Person, Nature, and Substance, in which he was in the beginning with God: and consequently, was passible in that Nature and Substance. And this opinion agrees, not only with the Apostles Creed, as it is called; but with the new Testament itself, from whence all Creeds

Creeds ought to be taken. And therefore there is no appearance of probability, in ſuppoſing it to be heretical; or that it is a greater ſign of obſtinacy or depravity of mind, to maintain this ſide of the queſtion; than the other, which is called the Orthodox opinion by the Party which holds it. For though the *homöouſian* doctrine prevails at preſent, in the *European* eſtabliſhments; it is well known, that this is not the Caſe in Aſia; where the ancient Faith of the *Antenicenes* is ſtill preſerved: which the *Europeans* look upon as a Novelty or Innovation in the Chriſtian Faith. For as Archbiſhop *Laud* ſomewhere obſerves, very well; "When "Errors are grown-up by Age and Continu-"ance; they, which ſpeak for the Truth, "though it be far older, are ordinarily chal-"lenged for bringing-in new Opinions." Time was, that the whole World rejected the *homöouſian* doctrine; as I have obſerved: and it is remarkable; that the whole Race of the Gothic Kings was againſt it. And if it be true, that the Neſtorian Council under Copronymus decreed the Arians to be orthodox, as *Baronius* aſſerts (*b*); and that they denied the Son to be conſubſtantial with the Father, as *Cornelius a Lapide* tells us (*c*); and worſhip Chriſt as the Arians do (*d*): the oppoſers of the homöouſian

(*b*) Ad. an. 754. ſect. 25. (*c*) On Matt. xxviii. 19.
(*d*) Ad an. 690. ſect. 5.

doctrine muſt be greatly the moſt numerous in Aſia at preſent(*e*). It is therefore ridiculous for the Europeans to think of determining the queſtion by a majority of Votes among their own Sects. And the more ſo, when we conſider; that even the moſt Orthodox among them have long ago deſerted the great *Athanaſius*, the bulwark of their party. For not a man, who calls himſelf a homöouſian, has dared for many years to defend the doctrine of a Perichoreſis; though *Athanaſius* declares it to be ſo neceſſary, to keep the three divine Subſtances together; that, without the help of it, the *homöouſian* doctrine is no better than Tritheiſm.

4. It is certain, that no man, who thinks of building his Faith upon any but a ſandy foundation; can reſt contented with the notion, that his Religion is inconſiſtent with itſelf; or contradicts his underſtanding: it becomes every Chriſtian therefore, for his own ſatisfaction, as well as for the cauſe of Chriſtianity, to be always ready to give an anſwer to every one that aſketh him a Reaſon of the hope that is in him, I *Pet.* iii. 15. And no Chriſtian, whatever his pretences may be, can poſſibly believe the *Catholic Religion* (or the Religion of the Church he belongs to) to be true; as long as he ſees, that it maintains ſuch doctrines; as

(*e*) *Sandii* Hiſt. Enuc. lib. I. p. 189. lib. III. 42. Edit. Coſmop.

con-

contradict the *Chriſtian Verity*, or the Religion of the Goſpel. The oppoſition between theſe two Rules of Faith, has occaſioned the Introduction of all our Errors; or rather, the Introduction of our Errors has occaſioned the oppoſite Rules of Faith: and theſe Errors will always continue in the Church, till this *deadly wound* is healed; and the Religion of the Churches gives way to the Religion of the Goſpel. But this cannot be expected; becauſe the Religion of the Churches is a Religion, which men have made for themſelves; and is generally eſtabliſhed by the Authority of the State.—However, this is the only cure that can poſſibly be found for this Evil. "This only I inſiſt on," ſays Dr. *Whitby*; "that the controverſies con-"cerning the Trinity," [and I may add, on other material Subjects alſo;] "cannot certainly "be determined by the Writings of the Fathers, "the decrees of Councils, or by the undoubted "documents of univerſal Tradition; nor is any "thing to be believed or ſafely aſſerted, but "what can be plainly proved from the holy "Scriptures(*f*)." The Scripture is the only Authority, to which Europeans and Aſiatics both will bow; and by which they will be determined: and, where the Scripture is ſilent, we have learned, by the experience of former ages, that the interpoſition of human Authority

(*f*) *Whitby* Dif. Mod. Præf. 111.

has

has always done more harm than good. No Chriſtian was ever perſecuted, fined, impriſoned, or burned, by Chriſtians; for not ſubſcribing to the word of *God:* but very many have been, for not ſubſcribing to the words of *Men:* and it appears at the ſame time, from experience and fact; that the methods, which have been taken by Councils and Synods, to eſtabliſh Unity of Opinion by human decrees; have been the very cauſe of their Diviſions and Animoſities. While the Chriſtians were contented with the words of Scripture, that Chriſt was *of God* or from God; ἐκ Θεοῦ· there was no diviſion upon the queſtion—when they added to this, by way of explanation, and required it to believed; that he was ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Θεοῦ, *of* or *from the Subſtance* of God; they divided into ſects, and murdered one another. When they attempted to explain what they meaned by the words, *out of the Subſtance of God*; they ſubdivided. And this muſt naturally be the caſe, upon the Impoſition of human Comments on diſputed Texts. Whereas, if the Words of Scripture, and what plainly and undeniably follows from them, will not unite men in the ſame ſentiments upon any Text; we may be well aſſured, that there can be no neceſſity for union of ſentiment upon that Text; much leſs any neceſſity of murdering one another, for diſagreeing about the explanation of it. When

Chriſt

Chriſt preached to the common People, he did not expect them to have clear conceptions on metaphyſical ſubjects; but only on plain practical Truths.

5. As all parties before the Nicene Council did agree, that we ought to honour the Son, even as we honour the Father; *Jo.* v. 23. this confeſſion ought to be looked-upon as a ſufficient Evidence of the ſame Faith; without ſpecifying the metaphyſical Nature of either: and bind us together in the ſame Communion, and unite us together in Love as Members of the ſame body: however we may differ from one another in points of Philoſophy.

To conclude; there have been ſo many diviſions made in the Church, ſo much ill-blood raiſed, and ſo many dreadful murders committed, under the pretence of preſerving the peace of the Church, on both ſides of the queſtion upon theſe abſtruſe ſubjects; in which it is impoſſible for men of the greateſt Learning and Piety to be all of a mind: that it is time to return to the plain Doctrine and Spirit of the Goſpel; and to underſtand it, every man for himſelf with the beſt help he can get, as well as he is able; and God will require no more of any Man: and ſo to become one fold under one Shepherd, and bear with one another's errors and infirmities. For the breach of Charity is a more heinous offence in the ſight of God; than a thouſand errors upon this, or any other metaphyſical Subject whatſoever.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

NUMBER I.

An Epistle of Arius, &c. to Alexander Bishop of Alexandria.

To our blessed Father and Bishop Alexander, the Presbyters and Deacons send Health in the Lord.

THE Faith which we have received from our Ancestors, and learned from THEE, most blessed Father is this: We believe ONE God, alone unbegotten, alone eternal, alone without beginning, alone true, alone immortal, alone wise, alone immense, alone good, alone almighty, alone Judge; the Creator, Ruler, and Governor of all things, unmoved and immutable;

APPENDIX.

NUMBER I.

An Epiſtle of *Arius*, &c. to *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria*.

To our bleſſed Father and Biſhop Alexander, the *Preſbyters and Deacons ſend Health in the Lord.*

THE Faith which we have received from our Anceſtors, and learned from THEE, moſt bleſſed Father is this: We believe ONE God, alone unbegotten, alone eternal, alone without beginning, alone true, alone immortal, alone wiſe, alone immenſe, alone good, alone almighty, alone Judge; the Creator, Ruler, and Governor of all things, unmoved and im-

mutable; juſt, good, the God as well of the Law, as of the New Teſtament. Who begat the only-begotten God, before all ſempiternal times *(ſempiterna tempora)*; by whom He created the ages and all other things. Moreover we ſay; that he begat him *really*, and not in *appearance* only; and formed him a ſubſtantial Being of ſuch a Nature, as not to be ſubject to change or alteration; a perfect creature of God, but not like any other. [Made, but not like other things: ſo *Hilary* reads.] Not, as *Valentinus* aſſerted, that this offspring was an emiſſion from the Father; nor, as *Manichæus* held, that the ſame offspring was a part *conſubſtantial* with the Father—nor, as *Sabellius*, who divided the Unity [*Hilary* ſays, who induced a Unity]; and called him a Son-Father: nor, as *Hieracas*, as a light from a light, or a lamp divided into two:—Nor, in ſuch a manner, as that, when he had exiſted before, he was begotten *afterwards*; and was then created into a Son: according as you yourſelf, bleſſed Father, in the middle of the Church and Seſſion of the Brethren, oftentimes did confute thoſe who aſſerted theſe things.—But, as we ſaid, we confeſs that He, being created by the will of God, received life and exiſtence from the Father; before all times and ages; and by that Creation the Father beſtowed on him Glory and Splendor.—And we ought not to think, when the Father

gave

gave to him the poſſeſſion of all things, that he deprived himſelf of any thing, which he contained in himſelf in an unbegotten manner. For he is the *Fountain* of all things. Wherefore there are *Three Hypoſtaſes*; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt. And God, as he is the Cauſe of all things, ſo he is the *Only one* of all things without beginning. But the Son, being begotten before Time, and created and made before Ages, did not exiſt before he was begotten: but being begotten without time and before all things, he is *alone* produced by the Father *alone*. For he is not coeternal with the Father, nor coingenit [unbegotten together] with the Father; nor hath he his exiſtence together with the Father: as ſome ſpeak, (concerning relations τὰ πρός τι) who make two unbegotten Principles. But, as Unity is the Principle of all things, ſo God is before all things; wherefore he is alſo before his Son *Chriſt*: as we have learned from you, when you preached it in the middle of the Church.—Wherefore, as He received of God Exiſtence and Life and Splendor, and whatever elſe was conferred on him; on this account God is his Origin and Principle. For God is before him, and above him (*prior ac princeps*), as being his God; and he was before him, becauſe *Chriſt* came forth from him. But if we underſtand theſe and the like expreſſions, I *came*, and I

come from the Bowels of the Father, as part of the *Conſubſtantiality*; or an *Emiſſion*, or *Production*, [προβολὴν,] as ſome do; the Father muſt be compounded, diviſible, and mutable, and even according to them, corporeal; ſo that as far as in them lies, God, who is without Body, will be liable to all the accidents of Body. We wiſh you well in the Lord, bleſſed Father.

Presbyters.	Deacons.	Biſhops.
Arius	Euzoius	Secundus of Pentapolis
Cethales	Lucius	Theonas, an African
Achilles	Julius	Piſtus, placed by the *Arians* at *Alexandria*
Carpones	Menas	
Sarmatus	Helladius	
Arius	Cajus	

See *Epiph.* Hær. 69. § 7, 8. *Baſil.* p. 113. *Hil.* lib. iv. and vi. de Trin. *Baſil.* p. 50. and 87.

During this Controverſy, Biſhop *Alexander* was for ſome time doubtful which party to eſpouſe; one while approving of one party, and another while of the oppoſite one. But at laſt he aſſented to the *Homöouſians*; and ordered *Arius* to reject the reaſons of the other ſide, and follow the ſame opinion with himſelf. *Niceph.* viii. c. 5. And when he could not perſuade him, and many of the Biſhops and Clerks of that dioceſe agreed with *Arius*; Biſhop *Alexander* excommunicated them all. And, while theſe things were doing, *Arius* wrote the following letter to *Euſebius*, Biſhop of *Nicomedia*.

NUMBER

NUMBER II.

Arius's Epiſtle to *Euſebius*, Biſhop of *Nicomedia*(a).

To my dear Lord, man of God, faithful, orthodox Euſebius; Arius, *whom Biſhop* Alexander *perſecutes unjuſtly upon account of the Truth which overcometh all things, which you alſo protect; health in the Lord.*

AS my father *Ammonius* was going to *Nicomedia*, I thought I ſhould act agreeably to my Order and Duty, to addreſs you by him; and at the ſame time inform that ſettled Love and Affection which you bear to the brethren for the ſake of God and Chriſt, how greatly the Biſhop oppoſes and perſecutes us; leaving no ſtone unturned, to baniſh us innocent men out of the City; becauſe we do not aſſent to him, when he teaches publicly in this manner.—The Father is always, the Son always, the Father and Son together. The Son coexiſts with God in an unbegotten manner. God does not præexiſt before the Son, one ſingle moment: not even in thought. God is always, the Son always; the Son is out of the Father himſelf.

(a) *Niceph.* lib. viii. c. 9.—*Euſeb.* apud *Theod.* lib v.—*Epiphan.* Hær. 69.

And

And becauſe *Euſebius* your brother (Biſhop) of *Cæſarea*, and *Theodotus* (Biſhop) of *Laodicea*, and *Paulinus* (Biſhop) of *Tyre*, and *Athanaſius* (Biſhop) of *Anarſarbus*, and *Gregorius* (Biſhop) of *Berytas*, and *Aetius* (Biſhop) of *Lydda* in *Paleſtine*, in ſhort all the Orientals aſſert; that God, who is without beginning, is prior to the Son; they are anathematiſed: except only *Philogonius* (Biſhop) of *Antioch*, *Hellanicus* (Biſhop) of *Tripolitanum*, and *Macarius* (Biſhop) of *Jeruſalem*; who are Heretics and unlearned. Some of which ſay, that *Chriſt* is an Eructation, others a Promotion, others coingenit (unbegotten with the Father;) whoſe impieties we cannot bear, though the Heretics ſhould threaten us with ten thouſand deaths.—But we have profeſſed, and continue to profeſs our aſſertion and opinion; that the Son is not unbegotten, nor by any means a part of the unbegotten; that he did not exiſt of, or from, any Subject; [any thing before exiſting, as the Subject out of which he was made] but by Will and Deſign before times and ages; and that he is plenary God only begotten (πλήρης θεὸς μονογενής) invariable, and was not before he was begotten or created, defined or made, for he was not unbegotten. We ſuffer perſecutions, becauſe we have ſaid, the Son hath a beginning; but God hath no beginning. Upon this account we ſuffer Perſecutions; and becauſe we have aſſerted, that he

he is of, or out of, nothing. But this we have asserted, in order to deny that he is a part of God; or existed from any Subject. Upon this account we suffer persecution: the rest you know. God grant you health; and remember our affliction: O truly *Collucianists*(*b*).

Socrates has given us the following letter of *Constantine* to *Arius*.

Constantine Victor Maximus Augustus, to *Arius*.

IT was some time ago signified to your Gravity, to come to our Court to be introduced to our Presence; which makes me wonder, that you did not immediately comply with the Order. Now therefore upon the receipt of this, make haste, and come in a public carriage; that, after experiencing our benignity and regard, you may return to your own native Country. God preserve you, my well-beloved. V. Cal. Dec. *Soc.* lib. i. c. 25.

Upon the receipt of this Letter, we are told, that *Arius* presently set-out for *Constantinople*;

(*b*) *Lucian* the Martyr, who suffered under *Maximinus*, held the same Doctrine; and *Dupin* says, all the Chiefs of the party were his disciples; one of these was *Eusebius* of *Cæsarea* (famous for his friendship with *Pamphilus* another Martyr), who solemnly declares the faith he held to have been the faith of the primitive Church.

with

with *Euzoïus*, who had been degraded with him: that the Emperor admitted them to his preſence, received them graciouſly; and commanded them immediately to draw-up in writing a Libel (*c*) of their Faith: which they accordingly did; and it is as follows.

Number III.

The Creed of Arius *and* Euzoïus, *delivered to* Conſtantine.

Arius and *Euzoïus* to our moſt religious and moſt pious Lord, *Conſtantine*, the Emperor.

According to the order of your Piety, moſt acceptable to God, our Lord the Emperor, we do declare our Faith; and in writing profeſs, in the preſence of God, that we and all our adherents do believe as followeth.

WE believe in one God, the Father Almighty; and in his Son *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord; who was made by him, begotten before all ages, God the Word, by whom all things were made both in Heaven and in Earth: who

(*c*) The word *Libel* is uſed by the Tranſlator of *Euſebius*, *Socrates*, &c. to ſignify a ſhort Writing, Schedule, or Scroll: the Greek word is βιβλιον. The Author has ventured to take the ſame liberty.

came

came down from Heaven, and was incarnate, and ſuffered, and roſe again, and aſcended into the Heavens; and will come again to judge the quick and dead. And in the Holy Ghoſt, in the reſurrection of the fleſh, the life of the world to come, the Kingdom of Heaven, and one Catholic Church of God, extending from one End of the Earth to the other. This Faith we have received from the holy Goſpels; the Lord himſelf ſaying to his diſciples, *Go, teach all Nations in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* If we do not thus believe theſe things; and truly admit of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, as the whole Catholic Church and the Scriptures, which we believe in all things, teach us; God be our Judge, in this world, and in that which is to come. Wherefore, moſt holy Emperor, we beſeech your Piety, that, as we are Eccleſiaſtics, and holds the Faith and Senſe both of the Church and holy Scriptures; by thy pacific and religious Piety, thou wouldſt rejoin us to our mother the Church; all controverſies and vain wranglings being ſilenced; that we and the Church, living in tranquillity, may join our uſual prayers with one accord for the peaceable and pious ſtate of your kingdom, and all your Family. See *Soc.* lib. I. ch. 26.

This form of Faith ſo pleaſed the Emperor; that he not only reſtored *Arius*, but recalled *Secundus*, Biſhop of *Ptolemais*, and thoſe that were with him, and *Theonas*, Biſhop of *Marmorica*, &c. But this could not be *Arius* the Arch-heretic, as is ſuppoſed: becauſe we are told by *Socrates*, lib. I. c. 33, that this *Arius* and *Euzoïus* were not reſtored and joined to the Catholic Church, before the Jeruſalem Synod, in the year of Chriſt 335: whereas *Arius* the Arch-heretic was recalled from exile long before; as the "Penitentiary Libel" of *Euſebius* and *Theognis* atteſts, *Socr.* lib. I, ch. 14. for theſe returned from baniſhment in 328; and this libel mentions the return of the Arch-heretic, as what had happened ſome time before. And *Valeſius* refers to the Second Book of Eccleſiaſtical Obſervations, to prove that *Arius* was dead before the *Jeruſalem* Synod; and conſequently all the ſilly Story of his death, which is told by *Socrates*, lib. I. 37, 38. *Soz.* 11. 28. *Athanaſius* in *Theod.* 1. and 4. &c. was an invention of the *Homöouſians*, to caſt a ſlur upon his character.

Number IV.

Victor Conſtantius Maximus Auguſtus, to *Alexander* and *Arius*.

WE underſtand that this was the ground of the preſent Controverſy.—That you, *Alexander*, enquired of your Preſbyters, what every particular man's opinion was concerning a certain Text of Scripture; or rather concerning the part of a fruitleſs controverſy: and that you, *Arius*, inconſiderately vented ſuch ſentiments, as you ought either not to have conceived at firſt; or, if you had had ſuch conceptions, it had been your duty to have let them be buried in Silence; upon this a diſſenſion has been raiſed between you; Communion is refuſed; and the moſt religious populace, rent into two factions, is ſeparated from the harmonious Unity of the whole body—Wherefore let both of you, mutually pardoning each other, quietly accept of what your fellow ſervant doth reaſonably adviſe to you. But what is that? It was your duty, neither to have aſked ſuch queſtions at firſt; nor if propoſed, to have made any return thereto. For ſuch queſtions as no law does neceſſarily limit or preſcribe, but are propoſed by the contentiouſneſs of an unprofitable va-

cancy from buſineſs; (although they may be framed to exerciſe and employ our natural parts, yet) we ought to confine within our own breaſts, and not inconſiderately divulge them in public aſſemblies; nor unadviſedly commit them to the ears of the vulgar. For what perſon among a thouſand is ſufficiently qualified, either accurately to comprehend the full efficacy and nature of things ſo ſublime and profound, or to explicate them according to their worth and dignity?—Or, ſhould any man look upon this as an eaſy performance; how ſmall a part of the vulgar will he induce to be fully perſuaded thereof? Or what man can, without danger of falling into groſs Errors, inſiſt upon the accurate diſcuſſion of ſuch nice Controverſies?—In queſtions therefore, of this nature, Loquacity ſhould be bridled and reſtrained; leaſt either through the frailty of our nature, (we being not able to explicate what we propoſed) or through the ſlowneſs of our auditors underſtanding what they are taught, being unable accurately to apprehend our diſcourſe, from one of theſe cauſes the people be reduced to a neceſſity of Blaſphemy or Schiſm.—Wherefore let an unwary queſtion, and an inconſiderate anſwer, with both of you mutually pardon each other. For this conteſt is not kindled upon an occaſion of any *Principal* or *Chief* Commandment of our Law: *neither have you introduced any new Hereſy* concerning the Worſhip of God. But you both hold one and

and the ſame opinion; ſo that you may eaſily cloſe in a conſent of Communion with each other.—For whilſt you thus pertinaciouſly contend about *Trifles*, and things of no importance; it is not convenient that ſo numerous a people of God ſhould be under your care and government; becauſe of your diſſenſion with one another: nor is it only miſbecoming, but it is alſo judged to be altogether unlawful. Now that I may advertiſe your Prudence by a ſmaller inſtance, I will tell you, You know, even the Philoſophers themſelves, how they are all united in the profeſſion of one ſect; when as, notwithſtanding, they frequently diſagree in ſome part of their aſſertions: But although they do ſometimes jar, in the very perfection of Knowledge; yet becauſe of the agreement and union of their Sect, they do again cloſe in a mutual conſent. —Now if it be ſo amongſt them; it will certainly be much more reaſonable, that you, who are the miniſters of the moſt high God, ſhould in like manner be unanimous in the profeſſion of the ſame Religion.—But let us now with more accuracy and greater attention inſpect and deliberate upon what has been ſaid; whether it be juſt and equitable; that becauſe of the *trivial*, *vain*, and pertinacious conteſts between you about *Words*, brethren ſhould be ſet in array as it were againſt brethren: and that, that venerable Aſſembly ſhould, upon your account, who

who contend with one another about things *ſo ſlight* and *in no wiſe neceſſary*, be rent aſunder by an impious variance.—Theſe conteſts are *poor* and *mean*; and do become a *childiſh Ignorance*, rather than agree with the gravity of Preſbyters and prudent men.—Let us of our own accord depart from the Temptations of the Devil.—Our great God, the Saviour of all Men, hath reached forth a light common to all Men. By the aſſiſtance of whoſe Providence, give us leave who are his ſervants, that we may ſucceſsfully finiſh this our Endeavour; that by our exhortation, diligence, and earneſt admonitions, we may reduce you to a Unity of Aſſembly. For in regard, as we have already ſaid, you hold the ſame Faith, and have the ſame Sentiments of our Religion; and ſince the Commandment of the Law doth in all its parts incloſe all in general in one Conſent and Purpoſe of mind: let not this thing, which has raiſed a mutual diviſion between you, (in as much as it appertaineth not to the power and efficacy of Religion in general;) by any means make a Separation and Faction amonſt you.—Theſe things we ſpeak, not to neceſſitate you to be all of one opinion concerning this *fooliſh*, *idle* Controverſy; of what ſort ſoever it be. For the precious value of the Aſſembly may be preſerved entirely among you, and one and the ſame Communion be retained; although there be interchangeably

amongſt

amongſt you a great diverſity of ſentiments in things of the ſmalleſt import. For we do not all mean the ſame in all things; neither is there one diſpoſition or opinion in all of us. Therefore concerning the divine Providence let there be among you one Faith, one meaning, and one covenant of the Deity.—But as for theſe *ſlender* and *light* queſtions; which with ſo much niceneſs you diſpute of, and make reſearches into, among yourſelves; although therein you do not all agree in the ſame opinion, yet it is your duty to confine them in your own thoughts; and keep them within the ſecret repoſitories of your own minds.—Let therefore an unalterable and excellent common friendſhip, a belief of the truth, the honour of God, and a religious obſervance of his Laws, remain amongſt you, firm and immoveable; return to a mutual friendſhip and charity: reſtore to the whole body of the people their uſual Embraces. And be you yourſelves (having, as it were, purified your own ſouls) acquainted again, and renew your familiarity with one another. For friendſhip is frequently more ſweet and pleaſing, after the occaſion of the enmity is laid aſide; return to a reconciliation again. Reſtore therefore to us peaceable and ſerene days, and nights void of ſolicitude; that, during the reſidue of our life, we may have the pleaſure of that pure Light, and the joy of a quiet life reſerved for us. Which

if

if we ſhall not obtain, we muſt neceſſarily groan, and be wholly ſurrounded with tears: nor ſhall we finiſh the reſidue of our life without great diſquietude.—For whilſt the people of God (I mean our fellow ſervants) are rent aſunder, by this pernicious and indiſcreet diſſenſion which they are now involved in; how is it poſſible for us in future to continue in a ſedate temper of mind? And that you may be ſenſible of our exceſſive ſorrow for this thing, [be attentive to what we ſhall tell you] when we lately came to the city of *Nicomedia*, we had forthwith reſolved to take a journey into the *Eaſt*: But while we were haſtening towards you, and by the greateſt part were with you, the news of this affair quite altered our Reſolution; leaſt we ſhould be neceſſitated to be a Spectator of theſe things, which we could not endure even to hear.—Do you therefore by your unanimity for the time to come, open the way for us in into the *Eaſt*; which by your mutual diſcord you have ſtopped up. Give us leave with joy ſpeedily to ſee you and all the reſt of the people; and that with an unanimous conſent of praiſes we may offer up to God due thanks for the public agreement and liberty. *Socr.* B. I. ch. 7.

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